By
William Bennett
Lei Gibbons

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THE

KING OF THE PEAK.

A Romance.

BY THE
AUTHOR OF "THE CAVALIER," &c.

"The truth is, I have a plot for you." — *Cutter of Coleman Street.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO

THE WORSHIPFUL

THE MAYOR OF LIVERPOOL,

IN COMMON COUNCIL ASSEMBLED.

Sir,

It will no doubt be a matter of some surprize that you should be thus publicly addressed by a stranger, on a subject, which, at first sight, would seem foreign to the enquiries of a great commercial magistrate; and if I was not sure that the merchants of your emporium emulate the Medicis as much in their love of literature, as they exceed them in the extent of their traffic, I should apprehend some such rebuff as

Sir Richard Birnie bestows upon those of his suitors, who are led to his office by their impertinence. Taking it for granted, however, that you are inclined to concede as much attention to me as I am desirous of paying respect to your Worship, I shall consider myself as released from the forms of ceremony, and proceed to address you with the same confidence as I should use towards a near friend.

Several ages have elapsed since the events set forth in the body of the following work were wrought. A new order of things, as well as a new race of men, have appeared upon the scene; and in nothing that has suffered mutation, has there been such change as in the ancient and loyal town of Liverpool. About the period of my story, the poor inhabitants heartily besought the Queen (Elizabeth) to disfranchise their borough, inasmuch as they could not bear the expense of supporting members to parlia-

ment. Then was your town a miserable fortress, known only as a landing-place from the sister kingdom, without commerce, or the means of commerce, shipping; — without trade of any kind, unless it were the employment of a few fishermen, or the running of a few tods of wool or firkins of butter between Liverpool and Ireland, — nay, almost without inhabitants; and the small population that there was, fainted beneath the scourge of intolerable poverty. How changed the picture is now, — how brightened the prospect, — I need not inform the world. There is no nation with any touch of civilization, that has not heard of your rising greatness; that has not heard of your daring emulation in commercial enterprize, which has outsailed all competition; that has not heard of your splendour, and your riches. In population, in magnificence, in all that can elevate you to a level with the first cities of the world, unless they were the

seats of majesty, you are equal, at least, to any, and many you surpass, as much as an increasing excels a perishing body.

I fancy I hear your Worship cry, "Hold, hold, Mr. Author, you need not tell me that which I know. Truisms are against all rules of commercial brevity!" I beg your Worship's pardon. Many happy hours, which I have spent in your town, have endeared it to my memory, and though, being a young man, I am not yet entitled to my hobby, I declare if ever I should attain a good old age, and arrive at years of hobbyism, I shall choose for mine, the remembrance of the elegance, and the good-fellowship of Liverpool.

But to proceed. Your Worship will in part perceive, and I must give you further assurance, (as we of the law say,) that the materials of my story are facts. The personages are such as really played parts in the drama of life, and such parts as are assigned them here. Edward

Stanley was the proud, fierce, and wicked character which is pourtrayed; and I have only further to say, in relation to this part of my romance, (if it may be called one,) that I would wish your Worship to give my compliments to Earl Derby, and request that he will pardon me for having raked up the ashes of the only bad man of his house, to supply a picture to my gallery.

The traditions of Derbyshire, I have no reason to suppose your Worship can be acquainted with; but if you have ever visited the far-famed waters of Buxton, I make no question but that you have prolonged your tour into that most beautiful part of the Peak which includes Chatsworth and Haddon, the scene of the greater portion of this romance. If you have not, you have missed the sight of the finest country that ever the bright eyes of beauty gazed upon. My great contemporary, the author of Waverley, in describing the features of Scotch scenery

dolefully bewails the scantiness of woodland, and is obliged to soften the horrid austerities of his rocks and crags, and to clap a handsome mask over their old rugged and rusty visages, like my grandmother when she went to a birth-night; but the valley of the Derwent and Haddon Dale, with their intervening hills, woods, lawns, and waters, each having its palace, one of ancient and the other of modern grandeur, compose a scene of diversified beauty, of rich and luxurious loveliness, which cannot be equalled in England, nor surpassed in the world. I have leaned over the battlements of Haddon tower, I have seen the Wye sparkle beneath, I have looked down into the vale of Chatsworth from Calton Edge, and watched the deer bounding across the park; I have seen all these on a warm and sunny day, and my mind, filled with the traditions of the country, has thrown itself back into the manly and gorgeous

age of Elizabeth. I have gazed upon the herds of deer, until they seemed to change their hairy coats for velvet and embroidery, and at once these children of the forest were converted into "Bess of Hardwicke," the renowned ancestress of the Dukes of Devonshire, and her long retinue of gentlemen and retainers. I have walked amid the silent and deserted courts of Haddon, until my mind's eye has peopled them with the badged domestics of the King of the Peak, until hall and bower, gallery and office have swarmed with population, until I have heard or seemed to hear the notes of the minstrel, and the loud uproar of the revellers. Again is the feast spread in the hall; solitude gives way to life and bustle; the Vernon rises from his marble tomb in Bakewell Church, and is once more at the head of the genial board, surrounded by his two hundred retainers. I pass the old portal of the mansion,

and again do I hear the baying of the stag-hounds, and the shouts and horns of the hunters. Again does the lovely Margaret Vernon bound past me on her courser, fleet as the wind, her hood thrown back, her rein loose, her cheek fiery red, her eyes bright as the sun. A regiment of retainers, unable to keep pace with her, ply scourge and spur in the chace, whilst the hardy woodmen on foot are not left far behind. I could go on, your Worship, in reveries of this nature, until I should be heartily sick of the modern world, but, alas! it will not do. I can reveal these feelings of my heart to your Worship with a good grace, secure in my masquerade, but were I to deliver them in person, a thousand to one but I should be laughed at for my *naiveté*. As I have said thus much of myself, I may be pardoned for saying somewhat more. By right I should not have been an author; of all men in the

world, I am most unfitted for a province which requires continual exertion. Now, your Worship must know that I am naturally inclined to idleness or pleasure, stubbornly and steadily determined to sloth and enjoyment. This very work was begun in the spring of last year, and according to my own calculation, should have been ready for the press at midsummer.

In February, 1822, having a mind to fix upon some work of this kind, I visited Haddon and the adjacent country, to lay in a stock of materials, and returned to my cottage with a tolerable budget full of particulars. On entering my study, I found on the table the London Magazine for that month, which, as I then thought, unfortunately, contained an article, a poem, and a very fine one, called "The Seven Foresters of Chatsworth," which embraced my very subject. I found, on perusing it, which I

did several times over, and every time with renewed pleasure, that the author had forestalled part of my tale, that he had visited and beautifully described my scenery, drawn some of my characters, and altogether had written a much finer ballad than any which had appeared in modern times. I'faith, Sir, this discovery staggered me no little, and I began to be somewhat mortified, not only that my subject was pre-ingrossed, but that I had been at the expense and trouble of a journey at that time of the year, which was likely to be of no service. But here, your Worship, my nonchalance saved me from overheating myself, and presently my critical habits came in to my aid, and I resolved to examine whether this ballad were worthy of so much consideration, as I had, at first, been inclined to give it. I read it again and again. I could find little fault in the composition; bnt I found that the cha-

racters were not so closely allied to mine as I had imagined. The Outlaw was there, it is true; but he confesses himself to be a poor devil: whilst my Outlaw, the real one of tradition, was a man of quality. The ballad also mentions Lord Devonshire and one Julia Vernon to be contemporaries. "Ha! there," thought I, "I have you, your *poetica licentia* won't serve. Sir William Cavendish was not created Earl of Devonshire until the 15th of James the First, and then Sir George Vernon was dead and his daughters married, so that your Julia was all a fiction; besides, Sir George's daughters were called Margaret and Dorothy, two famous old names; but perhaps not so poetical as Julia; at all events they did not so well meet the ear of our poet." I now revived, and began my romance with fresh spirits, and although it has met with many delays, yet at length it is brought to a conclusion. That the

ancestor of his Grace the Duke of Rutland did gain his bride in the manner described in the following sheets, the whole neighbourhood of Haddon will bear me out, at least if tradition be regarded as any evidence; that he and the rest of the noble personages, whose names I have presumed to touch upon, will accord me their pardon, I dare humbly to request.

A word more with your Worship, and I have done. It has been signified to me by my worthy publishers, that in giving my romance the title of King of the Peak, I shall seem to have adopted part of the name of the author of Waverley's last novel. It may certainly appear so, although there are many most respectable gentlemen in the county of Derby, who can bear witness that I intended publishing this work under the title it bears, before there was any annunciation of Peveril of the Peak. But if this romance will not

stand upon its own merits, in Heaven's name let it down, and there's an end.

With high respect of your Worship's person and office,

I have the honour to be
Your Worship's most humble
and devoted Servant,

LEE GIBBONS.

THE

KING OF THE PEAK.

CHAPTER I.

A sail, a sail, a sail. OTHELLO.

In the early part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the town of Liverpool, or as it was then spelled Leverpoole, was but in embryo; a poor and miserable fœtus, displaying no indication that it would ever arrive at the maturity which it has now attained. There was then no magnificent mole stretching its ample breast as a bulwark against the sea; there were no spacious docks crowded with ship-

ping from every point of the compass; no handsome squares and noble streets adorned with mansions and shops, rivalling those of the metropolis in elegance: all these improvements, all these ornaments were left for the honour and comfort of a later period. One chapel only (that of St. Nicholas) embellished, or rather served the town, instead of the score of gorgeous temples which Liverpool now possesses, that are worthy the most splendid era of Grecian or Gothic architecture. But in place of houses of religion were seen the swart turrets of the castle, and Earl Derby's tower, which looked down upon the lowly cottages of the inhabitants with the sullen indifference of aristocratic pride.

The castle, which was fortified after the fashion of the times, with wall and moat, was occupied by Sir —— Molyneux, its hereditary constable; and was situated in the midst of the little town, so as to command it in every respect. The tower of the Earl of Derby was nearer to the river, the waves of which, in tempestuous weather, or when the tides were

high, dashed up to the battlements, and at all times when the tide was flowing, engirt it on the western side with deep water, so as to admit boats and vessels of small burthen to enter the court-yard of the mansion.* This tower was a favourite residence of Edward, Earl of Derby, a character celebrated during the reigns of Henry the 8th and his children, above all others of the nobility, for his independence of spirit, his extensive beneficence and hospitality. He was so generous, that Queen Elizabeth used to say, he and my Lord of Bedford made all men beggars by their liberality; and so hospitable, that although it was his custom not to give any invitation, his houses were commonly filled with his friends and retainers; and Camden declares, that hospitality lieth buried in his grave. He was held in such love and estimation by the men of Lancashire and Cheshire, that it was supposed he could in one day draw twenty thousand fighting men to his banner; a magnitude of

* This tower has been pulled down within the last five years, having for some time before been used as a prison.

popularity, which, in the hands of a man less loyal than he was, might have been of considerable danger to the state; particularly when it is considered, that Elizabeth's right to the crown was for some time questioned, and that the Earl, by the ancient alliances of his family, did not lack a feasible claim, in case that of Elizabeth should be set aside.

But he was far too prudent to put in hazard that character which he held, for the sake of reaching at a rank which might elude his grasp, and which, if attained, could not add any thing to the devotion of his friends and cotemporaries; and, indeed, there does not appear any one in whom Elizabeth seems to have placed more implicit confidence than the Earl of Derby. For, although he had been a lord of the privy council to her sister Mary, and continued to exercise those religious rites from which the queen was averse, yet so firmly was his character established for honour and probity, for sound loyalty, and zeal for the public welfare, that he was confirmed in his office as privy counsellor, and enjoyed to

the day of his death the respect and friendship of his sovereign. It is true, that bishop Burnet numbers him among those weathercocks of religion, that, during the reigns of Henry the 8th, Edward the 6th, Mary, and Elizabeth, complied with all the changes that had been made in public worship; on which account, he says, such men were employed in every new revolution: yet, independent of that bitterness and religious spleen with which the good doctor writes against all persons opposed to his theological views, of an age no matter how remote, it is not to be supposed that the queen would have held the earl in such high respect, that honest Camden would have been his panegyrist, that the northern counties would have waited upon his word, had he played the part of a knuckling courtier, and worshipped each rising sun, as Burnet has represented. Moreover, cotemporary historians have borne testimony that he lived in great magnificence at his several mansions without any dependence on the court, which, as our readers will perceive by what is fore-

going, stood in need of his assistance, rather than he of the queen's favour.

At the time when our story commences, the Earl was between fifty and sixty years old. He had been thrice married, and by his two first wives had a large family; but his last wife, Mary, who was still living, had borne him neither son nor daughter. Henry and Edward Stanley, his eldest and youngest sons, were abroad; and Thomas Stanley, his second son, had lately quitted the family seat at Lathom, to be present at a magnificent revel, held at Haddon, in Derbyshire, the seat of Sir George Vernon. The Earl, intending to visit the Isle of Man, of which he was lord with regal privileges, left Lathom about the same time, and proceeded to his tower at Liverpool, for the purpose of embarkation.

The day on which he arrived upon the banks of the Mersey, had been what seamen call a West-India day, so hot that neither man nor beast could bear the fixed gaze of the mid-day sun; but, towards evening, a gentle gale springing up in the west, changed the atmosphere,

and scattered a refreshing coolness over the parched earth. Upon the declination of the sun the breeze increased, and blowing briskly inland, curled and agitated the waves, which broke in white surf upon the buttresses of the tower. About nine o'clock, according to the manners of these good old times, a bell, similar to the curfew, rang at the castle, an intimation that ingress and egress to and from the town was at an end for the night, on which account the gates were closed, and the guard placed, whilst an officer, then termed a water-bailiff, (whose province differed from that of the persons so titled in his Majesty's customs at this time,) came round to the quays and inlets, attended by the water-guard, to go through the formulary of nightly inspection.

Master Smalley, the water-bailiff, was, like most officers, "drest in a little brief authority," rather wordy and consequential; but otherwise good-natured and sincere, timid, flexible, and consequently irresolute; affecting to govern the minds of others, and yet submitting to every

body's judgment. He was in stature low, and in body pursy, with eyes which seemed to have been shot into his head, if one might judge by the depth they were from the surface of his face.

After attending with minute care to the examination of the small inlet or dock, which at that period contained all the shipping (six vessels) of the port, the water-bailiff stationed his guard, and walked to and fro upon the quay-side, attended by one of his understrappers, eager to enjoy the luxurious coolness of the breeze. The inhabitants of the town had, by this time, generally retired to rest, and few persons appeared nigh the harbour, except those who were engaged in a sea-faring life. Upon the great expanse of the river, which trembled under the light of a rising moon, no other objects could be seen than a few small fishing-barks, whose owners were busied in laying out their nets, and in gaining a hard-earned subsistence. Instead of the ship-bell spreading its dissonant clank along the shore, (a sound well known to the present inhabitants of Liverpool,) the

rude and melancholy, but sweet-toned song of the fisher, could be heard as the swells of the wind brought it to the land.

As the moon attained a greater elevation, the opposite shore of Cheshire, with its indentations of rock and inlet, and the ancient monastic house of Berkenhead, grew plain and distinct, while the more distant mountains of Cambria, like Ossian's ghosts, appeared in the distance wrapped in mist. On a piece of highland, the present scite of Bidston lighthouse, was placed a beacon, which, fired every night, guided the mariner through the sands and shoals at the mouth of the Mersey; but now the clear and steady light of the moon softened its red glare into a pale and sickly flame.

The water-bailiff, having received, as he fancied, a due proportion of benefit from the sea-air, was about to make his retreat, when, looking up the river, he descried afar off an object on the water, which bore no bad similitude, from its size and colour, to one of those black animals called by the learned Phocæna.

For a considerable time he reconnoitred it, with his arm placed over his eyes, whilst with his other hand he held fast the tippet of his gown, to prevent the admission of the wind into his breast.

"As I am a good protestant, and enemy to all popes and papists," cried he deliberately, "that porpus is a monstrous fish!"

"A porpus!" cried an old seaman who stood by; "yonder is not a porpus; and a porpus is not a fish: therefore thou hast shot thy bolt over the left shoulder. 'Tis no more like to a porpus, Baily, than thou art to a gray gurnet."

"No, marry, no more it is, as I am a loyal subject to her majesty," returned the water-bailiff. "'Tis bigger than a porpus — very like it is a shark."

"By St. Nicholas, Baily," replied the man, "it is neither porpus nor shark.—"

"It is a whale!" exclaimed the officer, confidently, "as sure as my name is Lazarus Smalley, it is a whale!"

"He that christened thee Smalley," said the sailor to a companion, in an under tone "little wotted what thy carcase

would be at this time of day. A whale in a trout stream, Baily! 'Tis a boat with a square-rigged sail, and she is making for the port. Look out, she tacks under the wind in Garston bay."

"Whence comes she?" said the officer; "marry and amen that it be no Spanish cruizer! for though the Don has not, an ye list, declared against us his challenge of war, yet hath he long had an evil intention, and should be manfully regarded. I say let us give notice to the castle. What ho, guard; hither, sirs — bestir, bestir.

"Spanish cruizer!" cried the sailor, with a scornful sneer, after he had laughed immoderately, "I would thou hadst been alongside of a galloon for one half hour. Thou wouldst note the roll of a Spaniard, as long as thou couldst carry thy land legs, i'faith! Look out again, Baily; she is a cock-boat to a galloon, man! — a pinnace with a streamer flying at her mast-head."

"Marry, I am glad on't," cried the bailiff, drawing out his breath; "I have

sweat brine enow to salt a porker, though it blows a cutting east wind."

"A gentle western breeze, Baily!" said the seaman, "as ever blew ship into port: but I had reckoned thee a valiant heart; thou dost seem fright-bitten."

"Not a whit, not a whit," replied the bailiff; "not a jot, as I am her Majesty's officer. I am as good a man, and as tall as any here when I see my enemy."

"Thou needst but wait the striking of a bell," returned the sailor; "and if that boat be manned by foes, they will shew thee how to ware thy courage. Bear a hand, bold heart; they are coming over the ropes at ten knots."

"Marry, an they be foes," cried the water-bailiff, "I would each man had ten knots round his neck as he stands; but see ye, they put off again towards Wallasea-creek."

"Ay, ay," returned the sailor, "next tack they'll be right for us: out with thy whiniard, Baily, and stand on thy defence; they'll capture the town else."

The water-bailiff, whose sense of ridicule was by no means sharp-sighted,

gazed upon the boat, which was now plainly seen ploughing her way through the river, with evident signs of consternation. He more than once turned his back upon the water, and advanced a step in his retreat; but shame, and perhaps curiosity, getting the better of his fear, forced him back to his former position. At length, the little vessel having run the length of her tack a-breast of the fort, hauled her wind, and stood in for the harbour.

"Here she comes," cried the seaman who had spoken before, "as if all the devils were blowing at her main-sheet. Huzza, Baily, where's your guard? The foe bears down upon us.—Turn out, turn out The Spaniards are for the boardage."

"Marry, is't, is't indeed?" cried the officer, crouching down so as to obtain the best possible view of the approaching vessel; "yea, she bears my Lord of Derby's pennon; ay, ay, this is right enow. It is the good Earl's pinnace; make way, make way, Sirs, for the landing. Perchance it is Sir Thomas, from the up country."

As the boat approached nearer to the

quay, Master Smalley and his companions could hear the chorus of a rude ditty, sung by the boatmen, which sounded sweet and melodious as it swept over the water. The seaman and guard upon the quay seemed well acquainted with its burthen, for they no sooner caught the strain than they joined in with the mariners, and proceeded thus:

Now tighten your braces,
And let the boat go;
To run her more grace is,
Than hardly to row;
Set her right with the wind;
It blows freshly and cool;
And we'll scud o'er the flood,
In the bonny Bess of Leverpoole.

The gull wings it lightly
Over Mersey and Dee;
The moon glistens brightly
On land, and on sea:
A clear sky our fortune,
A fair breeze our dool,
And we'll scud o'er the flood,
In the bonny Bess of Leverpoole.

The swell's on the wave, and
The wind in the sky;
The flood on the sand,
And the beacons blaze high:
A fairer night ne'er was
From Lammas to Yule;
So we'll scud o'er the flood,
In the bonny Bess of Leverpoole.

CHAP. II.

Welcome to England, to our silver isle,
That's better worth than silver. Welcome, friends!
I say once more.
There is a deed for the doing, that to ye all
As to ourselves shall render fair content.

PYLGRYMAGE OF GRACE.

THE boat, taking what is now called a man-of-war's sweep, (a circuitous double,) to get broadside with the shore, came up to the slip or landing-place, with a hearty hurrah from her mariners; one of whom having cast out a grappling iron, she was made fast by those who stood upon the quay. The water-bailiff and his companions, eager to gain a sight of the passengers, crowded forward to the brink of the water, and scarcely allowed room enough for those on board to step from the gunwale of the pinnace to the beach. There were three persons in the boat besides the watermen, two of whom were men of middle age and bulky

appearance; the third was much younger, tall, slender, and of elegant proportions. He was wrapped in a blue military cloak, which left no part of his person visible except the head, and wore his velvet cap, looped with a gold button, and feather, after the fashion of men of war. His companions were more amphibious in their carriage, but both, in appearance at least, seemed men who had sought their fortunes by flood and field.

The younger man was the first who leaped ashore, and pushing through the crowd without ceremony, fairly overturned Master Smalley, to the infinite diversion of the spectators, and as infinite mortification of the water-bailiff himself, who, aroused by the insult offered to his person, exclaimed loudly against the youthful aggressor.

"Body o' me!" cried Smalley, rising and scrubbing his back; "this is mighty civil treatment to her Majesty's officer, and by one, marry, that comes in the night like a thief on the watch."

Our readers will conclude that Master Smalley's courage had made a most

violent effort in pronouncing this declaration; and he had no sooner given vent to his angry feelings, than he thought it proper to stand aloof, out of the reach of any further compliment from the stranger. But the young gallant cried out, "Ho! Lazarus! I will give thee a plaister to cure thy bones withal, an thou will ask it on the morrow. But thou hast lard enow about thee to break thy fall, were it from St. Nicholas's tower."

"What, Master Edward Stanley!" cried the water-bailiff, coming forward. "Is it your honour that I called a thief? Blisters on my tongue for the word. We all thought you were in the Low Countries."

"But thou seest I am in England," returned Edward Stanley. "Saint Julian be thanked for good harbourage."

"Heaven be thanked! would do as well, under correction be it spoken," said the protestant water-bailiff.

"Peace, unmannered churl!" cried the youth, his eye lightning, and his brow reddening with anger. Master Smalley's

bulk evidently shrank under his reproof, and he removed himself speedily to a greater distance. In the meantime one of the strangers had landed from the boat, which the ebb tide would not allow to come so near to the shore as to allow debarkation without a considerable effort; and the remaining passenger, who, if one might judge from his caution, had not been much used to the sea, made several attempts to obtain footing on the shore, without effecting his desire.

"Set your foot on the gunnel," said the seaman, who had been on the quay before they arrived, "and give a hearty spring. You'll land like a flying-fish on deck in a gale of wind."

"Ah, softly friend," exclaimed the stranger in a gentle tone, "I understand not your flying and springing. I am too old and too stiff to go faster than a foot's pace. Lend me, I beseech ye, your hands."

"Here's my fist," said the seaman, extending his hand to the stranger; and Edward Stanley did the like.

"Now, my heart, step out like a cor-

morant. There, — steady — steady, — all's right and tight."

The stranger was at length landed, and bestowed something more than his benediction upon the friendly fellow who had assisted him. When they were all landed, the boat's crew ran her up into the inlet within the court of Lord Derby's tower, whilst Edward Stanley and his friends proceeded to the front gate, upon the knocker of which he commenced a rude attack. The porter, aroused from his sleep, speedily appeared at the wicket, and enquired who they were that wanted admission.

" Scaesbrick," said Stanley, " open the gate."

" Master Edward!" exclaimed the porter, drawing back the huge door, " my lord little wotted you would meet him at the tower."

" Is my father here? when came he?" said Stanley.

" At noon-tide," replied Scaesbrick; " he came hither from Lathom, and is journeying to Man."

" Is he at rest?" said Edward Stanley:

but before Scaesbrick could reply, he continued: "but thou will say no; it is his wont to walk upon the leads till ten o'the clock, when the moon looks on the water, and it is scarce nine."

"The bell hath rung some half hour gone by;" said the porter: but ——"

They were here interrupted by the approach of some person, who, advancing across the court from the door of the hall to the porter's lodge, accosted Scaesbrick as he came forward.

"Ho! Scaesbrick! who hast thou there?" But the porter delaying to answer, he came up, and said, "Now, sirs, what would ye with my lord?"

"We would see the Earl himself," replied Edward Stanley, in an assumed voice, and muffling himself in his cloak.

"The Earl hath seen ye, sirs;" returned the man, "and would know somewhat more of your history before he holds nearer converse with ye."

"What does he fear?" said the youth.

"Fear!" answered the domestic, with a scornful and threatening tone; "whence come ye, that thou dost ask what a Stan-

ley fears? Thy gay cloak hath little kin to thy beggar breeding."

"Why say'st thou I am ill-bred, sirrah?" enquired Edward Stanley.

"Because all gallant men of gentle nature," answered the man, "know the Stanley for the noblest, worthiest, and most courageous lord this day in Christendom."

"If you speak the truth, sir," said one of Stanley's friends, "monseigneur is of a nature very noble."

"If!" cried the domestic in a rage, and laying his hand upon his dagger.

"John Ormston," said Edward Stanley, resuming his natural voice, and throwing aside his cloak, "thou wilt not draw thy dagger upon me?"

"St. Mary," exclaimed Ormston, "have us in her keeping! Master Edward! and who are these? other masquers?"

"No," replied Stanley, "they are foreign friends of mine. But, prythee, conduct us forward to my good lord; and bid the cook seek his hatch; we are travel-spent, and must have refreshment, though

it be but a fragment of Manx mutton and a draught of double ale."

"Mein herz!" exclaimed one of Stanley's friends, opening his mouth for the first time, and with the right German accent, "things none so bad to a soldier that has lived on rotten horse-flesh by the ration."

"My lord has gone into the oratory," said Ormston; "he saw ye land as he walked, according to his custom, upon the terrace. He hath given ye into my charge until his prayer be over; and ye shall suffer neither fast nor penance in my hands."

The gentleman of horse (such was Ormston's vocation in the earl's service,) then conducted the travellers into the mansion, and retired to give the necessary instructions to the cook and butler.

"Now, holy father, and brave colonel!" cried Edward Stanley to his friends, when they were left alone in the hall, "I can bid ye welcome to England;—to England, changed indeed,—for she is not now the brightest jewel in the triple

crown, the holiest of nations; nor does the throne hold a sovereign worthy of the consecrated rose; but there are true hearts here still — hearts as steady in the faith of their fathers, as yon moon is to her course."

"Der Teufel!" exclaimed the German, "Maistress moon is a cursed simile; she shews twenty faces in one blessed hour."

"Marie!" ejaculated the priest, with a gentle shrug of the shoulders, "she is the emblem of inconstancy."

"But there are men in England, ay, in Lancashire," said Stanley, "as unshrinking as the rock in fair weather or foul."

"Der feind, Erdichtung!" exclaimed the German, "are they as true as mein stahlern blatt, or as mein petronel? They have never warped, they never will warp; they may be broken, shattered, destroyed, bnt they are stahl, der Teufel, to the last."

"You shall have judgment on them, Sparandam," replied Edward Stanley, and speedily. "Thou hast seen me do

somewhat for glory, which is of little worth; thou hast still to see what I and mine can do where the reward is worthy of achievement."

"I have seen thee, Edward Stanley," returned the colonel, "throw thy gauntlet at death where he played thee a thousand chances against thy single life. I have seen thee do that which none but a madman would attempt, and none but a hero could achieve. The down is but now on thy chin, and thy cheek is as fresh as a maiden's, and der feind knows how often I have seen thee enter the enemy's trenches in thy velvet doublet, when thou hadst need enow of cuirass and morion for thy defence."

"Vanity, vanity!" ejaculated the priest; "a sinful waste of life, and tempting of the destroyer; — but age will give wisdom."

"Never, never," cried the German, "will age tame the eagle, or fetter the wild hawk? Will it stop the tiger in his burst? — never, never; I had else by this time been a monk."

The priest, who belonged to the newly

established order of Jesus, looked upon his companion for a moment with an eye of displeasure; but, with the prudence of that crafty brotherhood, speedily cleared away all signs of disquiet from his countenance.

"I believe, Colonel Sparandam," said he, mildly, "you are in the right; age does not always communicate wisdom. But my meaning extended no further than to those who have the seeds of discretion in them, though they do not spring and blow until mature age."

"Ned Stanley has no more discretion," cried the German, abruptly, "than the wild wolf on the Riesen-Gebirg; his heart is a flame."

The Jesuit shook his head, and smiled upon the young soldier, who sat with his legs crossed, and an air of arch enjoyment, listening to the controversy of his companions.

"By my faith, gentlemen," said he, at length, "you use mighty freedom in your argument. Thou hast occasion, Sparandam, to deny me discretion, when I sit here like a stock-fish, and hear my-

self talked out of my seven wits. Were I not the paragon of prudence, and the prince of courtesy, thou wouldst be in for the French duel, — a three-yard pit, and inch daggers."

"Phiz! fire thy pattereros at the moon," cried the veteran, contemptuously. "I will be held on mine honour that thy discretion is never used but in the stratagems of a love-quest."

"Where the spoil," continued Edward Stanley, laughing, "is neither silver nor gold, nor jewels; but the smile only of a smock-faced wench."

"That will beat the drum upon you," interrupted the German, "when your back's turned, or when you've hold on the devil's tail."*

"I'faith, Sparandam," cried Stanley, thou hast learned thy philosophy in the spill houses at Brussels and Antwerp. Thou art an uncharitable devil; and if the women of England do hear thine opinion of them, thou wilt chance to have thy brains beaten out with stinking mackerel."

* "Il tire le diable par la queue," is an old French saying, when a man is in poverty.

"Ha!" grunted the German, "let me encounter a moving rampart of pikes, or the bursting of a petard, sooner than the infernal squall of a female route; der Teufel — it is hell itself."

This desultory dialogue was here interrupted by the entrance of Ormston, who preceded the servants bearing into the hall viands of sufficient quantity to feed Colonel Sparandam's regiment; upon which Edward Stanley invited his friends to commence operations without ceremony or delay, a request which was obeyed as soon as it was delivered. The German colonel, without waiting to cast his eyes over the board, for the purpose of selecting any dish peculiarly agreeable to his taste, laid his hands upon one nearest to him, which proved to be a huge venison pye; and not meeting with a carving-knife in his immediate neighbourhood, lugged out his double-edged dagger, and with as much determination as he would have exercised in attacking a foe, made a most horrible incision in the heart of the unoffending pasty. Having obtained a sufficiency of the crust,

he next thrust his poniard into the bowels of the dish, fished out of the gravy several ribs of the venison, and heaped up his platter until no spot of the shining pewter was visible.

Edward Stanley, whose voracious courage was of a temperament little inferior, helped himself in like manner, without paying much attention to the wants of his friends; but the Jesuit, a more temperate man, ate sparingly, and that of the most simple and least palatable dishes. He seemed to watch, with curious eyes, the inordinate gluttony of his companions, as a phenomenon to which he was unaccustomed, and which had somewhat astonishing in itself. But whether the greatness of appetite which he observed in them, or the ludicrous distortions of feature to which the quick despatch they made in appeasing the rage of hunger gave birth, it is doubtful to determine. It might be one or both, or a mixture of each; or, as a sober and rather cynical smile sat upon his shrewd features, he might be in the act of making a comparison of them

with himself. But if it were so, he enjoyed his triumph unobserved. The doughty heroes of the trencher, abandoning all spiritual converse, neither "looked down to blush, nor looked up to sigh," but kept their senses and organs resolutely fixed upon the meat before them, until they had eaten sufficient, and quelled that wolf which, unconciliated, doth prey upon the vitals.

The Jesuit drank as sparingly as he had eaten; his companions as lustily. They quaffed the red wine and the nut-brown ale with wonderful zest, and for some time with unwearied diligence. But the priest, whose sagacity was ever on the alert, fearing the consequences of too lavish a debauch in their expected interview with the Earl of Derby, besought them to put an end to their carousal.

"What judgment," said he, very seriously, "will the noble Earl form of you, Colonel Sparandam, a man entrusted with high matters of state policy, if he beholds you, on your first introduction to his house, not only gorge

yourself with victuals, as if, Saint Geneviève! you had been starved for a month, but dive into the wassail, and debauch like a Dutch trooper, as soon as you could clutch a goblet? And what, Colonel Stanley, will he think of you, having brought such revellers to abuse his hospitality? Men who sink all other recollections, be they never so important, for the sake of sensual appetite, as if, Heaven save us! it were our only purpose, in visiting this benighted country, to consume their perishable goods, instead of assisting them to redeem themselves from the thrall of heresy, blasphemy, and usurpation. "What! Edward Stanley! thou, descended from a royal and thrice gallant stock! think'st thou it is time for thee to waste precious hours in revelry, when the throne, which should be thy father's, is usurped by an heretical and bastard female? Where is fled thy daring and reckless spirit, which would bear no rival, much less a master? Where are fled those deep and low-breathed vows, which (nathless the opinion of Colonel Spa-

randam,) thou didst pledge for restoring thine own blood, the purely descended blood of its ancient kings, to the throne of England? Where—"

"Himmelsdonner!" cried the German, in a violent rage; "hold thy breath; thou dost begin, der Teufel, with giving fire to thy harquebuss, and would'st then level on us all the range of thine artillery. May not a rough soldier eat and drink in reason?"

"In reason!" cried the Jesuit, turning up his eyes.

"In reason! ja;" returned Sparandam, "what more? May I have the fiend for a yoke-fellow at bed and board, if there be aught more."

"Look upon the board, Colonel Sparandam," said the Jesuit, sarcastically. "Behold, where there stood noble dishes, you see crumbs and fragments; where there stood foaming flaggons, the wine and the ale are drained to the dregs. O, reason! thou fair but undefinable spirit, if thou hast hovered over these heroes during their meal, it was but until the Colonel stuck his dagger into

the venison pasty; thou didst fly off with the very steam of the dishes, and didst curdle up the chimney with the smoke thereof."

"What! thou would'st have the soldier live like the priests of thine order," cried the veteran, with a look of sarcastic contempt, "upon coarse bread and water? thou would'st have a man of bone and sinew strong enow to smite the whole order of Jesuits into dust, as the heretics say one Samson did the Philistines or Saracens, with the jaw-bone of an ass, live upon air? But thou shalt have good leave to smite and scourge me, holy father, when I refuse good fare when I can get it."

The foregoing argument was carried on much to the gratification of Edward Stanley, who, under the appearance of boisterous and careless gaiety, concealed more shrewdness and capacity than either of the disputants. He had also been secretly informed, by his father's gentleman of horse, that the Earl, wearied with the business of the day, and his travel from Lathom, would defer his interview with the new comers until the

following morning, and had, in fact, already retired to rest. He was, therefore, under no apprehension of being disturbed in keeping up the fire of the contending parties; nor, as his father's chamber had its aspect towards the garden at the other end of the tower, of their loud argument reaching his ears. Besides, the Earl, although the most perfect gentleman of his time, (elderly gentleman of course,) was too much used to the noisy and unchecked mirth of his own retainers, to think aught of this kind, which might by possibility reach him, extraordinary. It was more likely to operate as the busy hum of the hive does upon the queen bee — soothe him into slumber.

The young soldier now began a formal defence of the conduct of Sparandam and himself, in which he was more frequently interrupted than assisted by his impetuous colleague. Upon the Jesuit, however, who appeared like a man intent upon urgent business, which the slightest intervention might destroy, and who, therefore, abominated the intro-

duction of all topics that did not make for the service and accomplishment of his purpose, the oratory of his companions acted 'like cursed hellebore' distilled into his ears. He fidgetted, flounced, pulled horrible faces, and frequently exclaimed, "Good Heaven!" "Diable!" and other interjections, as little clerical as the last, indicative of his impatience and disgust; whilst his tormentor, with the art of a Cacus, chopped him unmercifully in every quarter. Being at length wearied with the exercise, Edward Stanley ceased his amusement, and made his father's apology to his friends.

"As my Lord Derby cannot see us to-night," he continued, "what think ye of beating a march to our chambers?"

"I am ready, and have been for an hour," exclaimed the Jesuit, springing up from his chair.

"Was; schon?" cried the German, enraged in his turn, to quit the genial board so early; "der Teufel! I had crossed my legs for a three-hours' sitting."

"Thou may'st sit and drink for three years," said Edward Stanley. "Ormston,

bring him wine enow to last him the night, and see he be not disturbed." "Nein, Himmel!" cried the colonel, in a pet, "if I am to be the only man at the gun, I will give in. Here's my last shot."

He drank off a goblet of wine at a draught, and then, without more than his usual share of grumbling, retired to rest with his companions.

CHAP. III.

O, loyal father of a treacherous son!
RICHARD II.

INSTEAD of retiring to his chamber, Edward Stanley, after conducting his companions to theirs, proceeded to that of his father, whom he found still awake. The Earl received him with great affection, not unmixed, however, with a considerable degree of surprise.

"Thou art welcome, Ned," said he, embracing his son; "I am glad to see thee in fair health and spirits. But what brings thee back so soon? and where is thy brother Harry?"

"The Lord Strange is in France," replied Edward Stanley; "I had a work to do in England, which brought me home."

"But why comest thou in the night," said the Earl, "without notice or messenger?"

"It was my desire to see you pri-

vately," returned his son; "the times are so suspicious, that a man may not visit his kin, but he is doubted of disaffection."

"Now art thou moody," said Lord Derby; "and I dare swear thou hast received some affront, which thy sword cannot avenge, and which thy hot young blood will not bear withal."

"Nay, dear father!" answered the youth; "it is thou that hast received an affront, which thy noble blood should not bear withal."

"Thy wit speaks in parables, Ned," said the Earl; "I have received no affront; there are few who dare offer one to my house."

"And yet, on no other occasion am I come thus far," said the young soldier, "than to maintain thy quarrel, to assert thy dignity, and to revenge thee upon those who have braved thy vengeance."

The Earl looked upon the glowing features of his son with an eye of paternal solicitude; fearful, from his excited manner and mysterious expressions, that his wits were in some degree deranged;

for, as he was and always had been, held in the uttermost respect by all persons and parties in the realm, and was so far from having been treated with insult, that all ranks united in regarding him as a father of his country, he was puzzled to determine to what subject the words and hints of his son could have reference. He was, therefore, for some time, at a loss what to say further on the subject; and continued to regard Edward Stanley, whose eyes were ardently fixed upon him, without making any return to that which he had uttered.

"I see," said the youth, observing that his father did not reply, "that you consider me either as a madman or as a fool; but listen, and perchance you will think me neither."

"Thou art a whit enthusiastic, Ned," replied the Earl; "it is a point of thy chivalrous nurture."

"I had but newly entered France," continued Edward Stanley, "when I was persuaded by many Englishmen of our own faith to join the army of the

Duke of Guise, which was then marching against the Huguenots under Condé."

"Ha, Ned! this was wrong!" said the Earl; "thou knowest all English subjects are forbid to meddle on one side or the other."

"But there is a higher power than that of the civil governor," continued the youth; "I mean, the spiritual authority of our holy father, the Pope; which enjoins all faithful sons of the church to aid in the extermination of heretics."

"Meddle not thou with this jargon, Ned!" exclaimed his father; "it is thy duty to render unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's — to maintain allegiance to thy natural sovereign. In spirituals alone hath the Pope authority; and if he be wrong, his power may be opposed. Such is the doctrine I have held through life; and on the threshold of the grave I will not alter it."

"The Earl spoke his sentiments with such grave vehemence, that his son, bold as he was, feared to prolong the altercation. He knew, also, that the Pope's

temporal power was utterly rejected by his father, who, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, had joined in that famous declaration to Pope Clement the Seventh, denying his authority to annul the divorce pronounced between that king and his wife Catherine. In fact, he was one of those, who, attached to the Romish culture, was resolute in withstanding any usurpation by the Pope, of lay domination; an acquisition to his spiritual power which he deemed by no means indispensable. Under these circumstances, the young soldier thought it best to proceed in his narrative, without further noticing the interruption it had experienced.

"In the army of the Duke of Guise," he continued, "I had opportunity to observe the correspondence that leader held with the mal-contents of England."

"Ha! what mal-contents? Thou didst observe them?" said the Earl.

"Yea, with an eye as keen, a head as clear, and an ear as tender, as any man dreading his death's doom could note withal," returned the youth.

"Well, Ned, the traitors were —"

"The Poles," cried Edward Stanley, "of kin in descent from George of Clarence, brother of Edward the Fourth, and Sir Anthony Fortescue, who married their sister; these, with the help of France, are to proclaim the Queen of Scotland our sovereign."

"But when, forsooth? and where?"

"An armament will shortly be prepared, and the Lion of England, garlanded with French lilies, will be planted on the shores of Wales. There will they first debark, and try the strength of their faction."

The Earl, with a smile of contempt, said, "If this plot were like to be of any danger, it is well thy young courage did for once quit the path of duty; but there is nought to fear."

"To fear!" answered the young warrior, bursting into a laugh; "why their cause is hopeless. Arthur Pole and Anthony Fortescue, save their individual retainers, cannot raise a man; and the alliance of France with Mary of Scotland, will alone gird every Englishman's

sword to his thigh against her. I would not give an acre out of Knowsley-park, for her claim to the crown of England."

"Right, Ned! thou hast the eye of a Norway hawk," cried the earl; "the Queen must know of this; the traitors must be dealt with."

"Ha! wherefore?" said Edward Stanley. "Let them land and battle their quarrel with the heretic faction: they will destroy each other at last."

"I understand thee not," replied Lord Derby; "thou would'st not, sure, have thy country thrown into commotion, when thy word could provide a remedy; and when thy duty bids thee to pronounce that word."

"What duty?" exclaimed his son, with an exalted tone. "I am forced to be subject; but I owe yon proud woman on the throne no jot of allegiance. Let her hold the crown if she can keep it; but I will not be accessary to her usurpation."

The manner, the tone of voice, the premeditated determination with which Edward Stanley vented these treasonable

expressions, for a moment struck awe into his venerable parent, who regarded him with a look of mingled anger and pity, without being sufficiently collected to reply to his harangue; and it was with some difficulty that he could, after a prolonged pause, get out the words, "What would'st thou, Edward Stanley?"

"What would I!" answered the youth, with a burning cheek and enkindled eye; "I would have no bastard woman for my sovereign, to be a jest and band-word among the nations of Europe; and if she fall, Heaven speed her ruin! think ye a foreign minion, like Mary of Scotland, could be palmed upon us? No; her rejection, sure as it is, would open the road for more worthy claimants; and why should not you, who, by ancient alliance, have a right as clear as any of the cobwebb'd claims thrust upon the nation, ascend the vacant throne? Your power — your popularity — would raise force enough to quell, as Harry Tudor did, all opposition: and your reign would restore to England that ancient

worship, of which a mad and fanatic generation hath despoiled it."

The earl, in whose mind a succession of violent emotions had prevailed from the commencement of his son's treasonable conversation — first, surprise at his audacity — then, anger at what he deemed his folly — and, lastly, grief at his inordinate ambition — now gave way to unutterable sorrow, and made no reply, but waved his hand and shook his head. The youth, fancying that these signs of displeasure arose merely from his father's doubt of success in an attempt upon the crown, arising, perhaps, as he thought, out of an apprehension that his means and strength were inadequate to the completion of so important an undertaking, hastened to assure him that assistance could be obtained from abroad.

"Philip of Spain," cried the elated youth, "is already in our plot: jealous of Elizabeth, and as opposite to the aggrandisement of France, he is ready to assist you, heart and hand, to grasp the sceptre of England. I have fought for him — he and his will fight for you.

Neither money nor troops will be wanting to favour your just and righteous cause."

"Righteous!" exclaimed the honest senator, in the agony of his heart.

"Ay, sir, righteous — divine," returned his son; "for the causes of monarchs are divine, and you are in right a monarch. But right or wrong, Spain is your friend, and for the purpose of your aid hath two of his emissaries, right able men, come hither with me to visit you."

"Oh, glorious and omniscient Father!" exclaimed the earl, raising his hands and his eyes to heaven, "wherefore in thy mercy hast thou not prevented this youth in his dreams of ambition? Why hast thou suffered him to lay hold upon the bait of the tempter, which, golden and glittering to his warped fancy, will tear out the very core of his heart, and cast it bleeding into hell? What, Edward!" cried he, turning to his son, who beheld him with an air of chagrin, "hast thou no sense of the foul crime of disloyalty, and of introducing into thy peaceful country a host of foul and murderous

foreigners, to trample out her bowels with their armed heels? Has England enjoyed too long a relaxation from strife — from fire and rapine, and murder — that thou would'st again recal those iron ages of her shame and ruin? — that thou would'st once more plunge her into blood and anarchy? How, think'st thou, I could free myself from the allegiance I have sworn? Thou wilt say, by dispensation; but woe upon that soul which cheats itself with such like absolution. I have sworn allegiance, and the rest of my days will be too short to hazard mine eternal soul for short-lived authority."

"To oppose an heretic is no sin," said Edward Stanley, with dogged sulkiness.

"The Queen's religion, sir," replied his father, is between God and her conscience. Upon that score you are no less a traitor in opposing her. The claim of the Pope, to set aside the succession of all princes differing from the Romish church, is monstrous, and in this age weak and absurd. Even you are not fool enough to be deceived in it."

"But Elizabeth is base-born," proceeded Edward Stanley; "declared so by her own father and the parliament, whose will is not to be questioned."

"And hath not parliament restored her?" returned the earl.

"No; the act hath not been repealed," said the youth.

"But if not," answered Lord Derby, "hath not parliament, by open and undoubted consent, acknowledged her claim, and chosen her sovereign?"

"The Lords and Commons were constrained," said the young soldier; "her election should have been free."

"But still, sir," pursued the Earl, with the desire of producing conviction on his son's mind, of the wickedness of his disloyalty, "if the Lady Elizabeth is not rightfully Queen, neither was her sister Mary; and yet you were content to serve in her armies."

"Because her faith was perfect," replied the youth; "in that my disinterestedness was manifest. In sooth, she was base-born as her sister; but her pro-

fession, in my eyes, cured her illegitimacy."

"Then why apply ye not your maxim to the next heir, Queen Mary of Scotland?" said the Earl; "her faith is Romish, after the manner of our forefathers."

"Is she not a foreigner, and a puppet in the hands of the Duke of Guise?" replied Stanley. "Would you have England, whose warriors, in the good old times, carried fire and sword throughout every province of France, and made the lilies shew pale upon the same scutcheon as the English lion, become a province, and tack to the Gallic monarchy? No; Saint George! let every Englishman fight upon his bloody stumps, like Witherington, rather than suffer so foul a treason!"

"Thou doest argue it fairly," said his father; "but if the objection thou hast against Mary Stuart be her foreign birth and espousal, thou canst not allege this stain against those of the house of Suffolk, that stand nearer to the blood royal than I do."

"They are women and heretics," replied Edward Stanley; "beside, they lack power, and the sinews of power — popularity. You have all, and are alone, of those that may claim the throne, worthy to possess it."

It was now apparent to the Earl, that his son had well considered every point that might be brought in opposition to his design, and had framed his plot upon grounds which he was resolved not to abandon. Neither law nor justice had any share in his deliberations; but were made to fly before the sweep of his insatiable ambition. The raising of troubles, and the introduction of an armed force into the country, were matters of slight moment to a young soldier, who had served at Saint Quintin and Gravelines; and who, having once been "brow-bound with the oak," yearned to emulate the Nassaus and Egmonts in their military reputation. The hope of becoming the conqueror of England had at least as much influence upon the mind of Edward Stanley as the aggrandisement of his family; and if one half of the popu-

lation had been slaughtered, and the other left only to ruin and desolation, he would have triumphed, as Alva did shortly afterwards in the provinces, in the wide-spread misery he had scattered. He seemed, as he stood beside the bed of his honourable father, a living picture of fierce and inflexible resolution. Two-and-twenty summers had scarcely passed over his being, and yet he had attained that sanguinary and remorseless character which few are perfect in while the bloom is on their cheeks. His features were handsome, and naturally formed for the expression of the gentler traits of the human disposition; but his wild and desperate, yet penetrating mind, had stamped them afresh, and had dashed the lineaments of kindness and good-nature with a cast of savage pride and unrelenting resolution. He had, nevertheless, sufficient art to smooth his features into their original character; and, when it suited his purpose, to conceal the demoniac spirit which lurked within. But in this instance, judging of his father by himself, he fancied the arguments

used by the Earl were merely those of a squeamish delicacy, which proper perseverance on his part could not fail speedily to overcome. In a tone, therefore, of placid resolution, he continued to address his father, whose anxiety and emotion had kept him silent.

"Use your own good pleasure; but, for my part, I here utterly disclaim all fealty and allegiance to Elizabeth Tudor; and until she lay aside that crown she hath usurped, I will fight against her to the last jot of my blood: nor other sovereign will I acknowledge from henceforth than Edward Stanley the seventh of England. God save him."

He knelt down, and endeavoured to kiss the hand of his father; but the Earl, springing from the bed upon which he reclined, pushed him back, and grappled him by the collar of his doublet, crying out, at the same time, "False traitor! I arrest thee of high treason, committed against her majesty. Think'st thou I am so hollow a knave as to profess duty where I mean to betray, or to uphold the Queen's title where I would

strike at her authority? Henceforth thou art no son of mine, but alien to my blood. I will do justice on thee, by Saint Bride. What, ho! Ormston!"

The gentleman of horse, who slept in the antichamber, aroused by the voice of his lord, entered the room; and the Earl delivered his son into his hands.

"Here, sirrah," cried Lord Derby, "secure him; and see that his companions escape ye not."

Ormston, in silent wonder, took hold of Edward Stanley's arm, who made no resistance, but said, with a calm smile, "Were I disposed to resist ye, John, you might need an helpmate; but for the gentlemen who are under your hospitality, Earl Derby," he continued, with a severe tone, "they are not amenable to your laws. They are subjects of his Spanish majesty, and have a right to tarry where it befits their ease."

"They are spies," returned the Earl in a rage; "vile spies and incendiaries, unworthy the name of gentlemen. But the law shall judge them; and you, sir, give me up your arms."

The young desperado, at this order, which he could not refuse to obey without actual rebellion against his parent, for the first time looked grave. He unbuckled the carriage sustaining his rapier and dagger, and as he delivered them to his father, gnashed his teeth in silent indignation.

"Away, sir, to your prison," exclaimed the Earl; "her majesty shall dispose of you."

"Heaven save her majesty's charity!" replied the youth, in the bitterness of his heart; "it is but poorly vaunted. She will dispose of me, 'tis likely, as Harry the seventh did of his benefactor, Sir William Stanley."

The Earl made a sign, and the gentleman of horse led his prisoner out of the chamber, and conducted him to a large room, which was now occupied by the Jesuit and Colonel Sparandam.

The latter was asleep; but the priest had apparently just arisen from his orisons, and was still dressed. After having bid his prisoners respectfully good night,

Ormston retired, and bolted the heavy door on the outside.

"This is a cursed blow at my hopes, by St. Columb," exclaimed Edward Stanley, sitting down on the bed where Sparandam lay; "I was flying at the sun, and a ray hath blasted me."

"What mean ye?" said the Jesuit.

"What mean I?" cried the fierce soldier. "Why, priest, that we are prisoners."

"Prisoners!" roared out the German, whom the noise, occasioned by the shutting of the door, had disturbed, and who was still between sleeping and waking. "Fire—stab—cut—vorwärts—himmel! nein quarter."

"Ay, roar, stab, fire, and cut as thou wilt," said Edward Stanley, "thou canst not break through stone walls and iron stancheons."

"What hath happened?" said the Jesuit with great calmness.

"What der Teufel is in the wind?" cried the German, with all his strength.

"Der Teufel is in the wind," cried Stanley; "and will blow us to hell. I

would not give three florins for our three lives."

"Nein!" returned Sparandam, starting up, a most portentous figure; "nein! I have been beset by sea and land, by flood and fire, and yet have I ever reckoned my life dearer than three florins' worth. What news with thee, Edward Stanley?"

"I will tell ye on the morrow," replied Stanley, with a calmness the more provoking, as he had so highly excited the fears and curiosity of his companions.

"Nay, but now," said the Jesuit; "let us know the worst of that which hath befallen us."

"We all need rest," returned the young conspirator; "and I will unfold to ye on the morrow."

Without deigning to enter into any further discussion, Edward Stanley leisurely drew off his boots and doublet, and threw himself upon the bed.

"Himmelsdonner!" cried the German fiercely, twisting his moustaches; but, as Stanley took no notice of this expression

of his chagrin, he concluded, "but, to-morrow let it be — it will be as well unriddled to-morrow as to-night;" and, turning himself on his side, he speedily relapsed into forgetfulness. The Jesuit, whose philosophy taught him to be content with that ignorance which he had not the means of enlightening, disposed himself also to rest; and his curiosity, set at rest for the time by the peremptory tone of his companion, soon found its quietus in the arms of sleep.

CHAP. IV.

> The parent's heart that nestled fond in thee,
> That heart how sunk, a prey to grief and care.
>
> BURNS.

IT is scarcely necessary to inform our readers, that the Earl of Derby obtained little repose after the departure of his son from his chamber. That rash ambition which had urged Edward Stanley forward into the vortex of treason, he strenuously condemned, and bitterly lamented; but he could not, like the elder Brutus, at once burst the ligaments of nature, and trample the ties of paternal affection beneath the stern foot of the patriot: he could not, at once, cast his son off, "and whistle him down the wind," as if it were no more to unravel the knot which binds father to child, than to snap a link of brass or iron. He felt, as every man must feel whose heart is not hardened by a rugged and haughty obduracy, which debases the mind by

the exclusion of every virtuous feeling, and miscalls its flintiness the discipline of philosophy. He was, we confess it without shame, fearfully agitated. The duty which he owed to the Queen his mistress, a mistress who, during the short time since her accession, had treated him with unbounded respect and confidence, forbade that he should harbour traitors to her government beneath his roof, and more particularly those, who, leagued with a foreign and powerful, though secret enemy, were likely, could they find means of enforcing the prosecution of their schemes, to raise commotions dangerous to her authority and the peace of the nation. And it operated much to increase the conscientious scruples of the Earl, that he was perfectly aware, had his son been no party to this act of treason, that he should without hesitation or suspense have committed his companions to prison for the infliction of the full severity of the law. His struggles were, therefore, commensurate with the honour and integrity of his character. When he reflected upon his

duty as a loyal and upright subject, and that he would, without remorse, have sacrificed the Spanish emissaries to the interest of the Queen, if his son had not presented himself as their accessary, he almost concluded to reveal the whole to her majesty, and throw their fate upon her clemency; but, as his mind reverted to the many hours, and days, and years which he had spent happily in the company of his wayward son, who, of all his children, was the best beloved; when he beheld the youth, seized, manacled, and thrown into a dungeon — perhaps brought forth for trial, condemned and executed, — his soul revolted at the spectacle.

"I will save him," cried the distressed father, "though my name, hitherto revered and honoured, will be covered with reproach. Yes, I will save him; princes have little mercy: for true did Ned Stanley say, the gallant Sir William Stanley, after hazarding life and land for the Earl of Richmond, was by Harry the seventh doomed to death upon circumstance — and neither I nor mine deserve

from Elizabeth as that knight did from King Harry."

The dawn of the morning, as it threw its grey mantle over the Mersey, found the Earl still watchful and busied in cogitation. He had turned over in his mind all ways likely to secure the safety of his son, without suffering him and his companions to return to their treasonable employment, which he wished carefully to avoid; but his ideas, like the swelling waves of the tide, rolled on one after another without affording any practicable expedient on which he could rest his hopes.

"I might send them to Lathom or to Knowsley," said the Earl; "but at either place his disgrace would be soon abroad, and I should be wearied till he were free. Here he cannot remain, or Molyneux will know all — at the Isle — yea, at Man, among mine own subjects, he will be safe, and so will the Queen's peace. To-morrow, nay, 'tis now morn," he continued, advancing to the casement; "if the wind serve, we will aboard to-day."

As he looked forth from the window, the sun, now rising, flung its soft and infant glimmer upon the waves of the Mersey, which were rolled gently forward by the undulations of the tide, and beat with hollow murmur upon the flinty ribs of the tower. At a short distance from the shore, the Earl's pinnace, with his pennon flying, was anchor'd within the deep water; and the gentle breeze, blowing from the south-east, pointed the streamer obliquely down the river, an indication that the wind was favourable for their embarkation.

"Saint Bride be praised!" exclaimed the Earl; "the wind is for us, and the ebb tide will carry us out speedily to the isles."

The Earl, having satisfied himself on all points connected with his voyage, at length betook himself to rest, and returned to his bed, with a heart, if not quite so tranquil as it was before his interview with his son, yet, at least, with a spirit much less troubled than it was after that event.

We shall, for a short time, quit the

worthy lord of the mansion, and proceed to the chamber of his *now* unwilling guests, who began to shake off the heaviness of sleep about the time Lord Derby disposed himself to receive it. The Jesuit was first awake, in consequence, most likely, of his recollection of morning monastic duties, upon which he entered with apparent fervour, and at considerable length.

Edward Stanley, whom his rising had disturbed, did not pay any attention to the pious exercises of his associate, but hastily drew on his boots and his doublet; and walking to the window, which he threw open, gazed out upon the water, as if he inhaled life from the fresh air alone. Here he stood, watching with careless eye the flight of the heron, or the whirling sweep of the sea-gull, as it darted down upon the waves, and skimmed along their surface. In his heart he envied every bird that was at liberty, and could measure its own flight by the strength of its pinions; and yet did he condemn those fowls he saw soaring

above the surge, for their grovelling and pitiful ambition.

"Were I yon dastard gull," he exclaimed aloud, to the great disturbance of the Jesuit's prayer, "I would fly me wherever falcon dared wing; and if I were yon heron, the northern eagle should not spread plume where I durst not follow: were I an eagle, I would soar against the sun until his fire burnt up my life blood."

"Gefangene!" exclaimed Sparandam, who was still asleep, but dreamed pretty accurately of his situation.

"Prisoner!" said Stanley, turning towards him; but observing that he still slept, he continued, "yea, but if the immortality of the soul be not a romance, we shall soon be at liberty; if it be — but who the devil is he on the quay so early. Ho! Master."

He called with his utmost strength, and the man came as near to the window as the moat which separated the tower from the quay would permit. This early stirrer proved to be the water-bailiff, honest Master Lazarus Smalley; who,

upon being questioned by Stanley of the cause occasioning his appearance at so unusual an hour, replied, that he had received some important intelligence, which had made it necessary for him to be on the look-out.

"And pray, worshipful signior," said Edward Stanley, "of what nature may this urgent news be, since it requires the attention of so important a personage? Is it the arrival of some fifty firkins of butter from Newry, or the exportation of half a dozen bales of woollen cloth to Dublin?"

"Neither, Master Edward Stanley," replied the offended officer; "it is —"

"News that the fishing-smacks have failed in their draught," said the soldier, "whereby there will be a rise of one farthing in the hundred — thou hast a hand in the fishery."

"Marry, Master Stanley, you are good at guessing," returned the water-bailiff; "but you may try again."

"What! thy wife hath run away with a Belfast skipper," cried Stanley, winking at the officer, "and thou hast news

of their slot. Marry, thou doest well to look sharp; but whistle hard, and she'll come bouncing over the line."

"Craving your pardon, Master Edward Stanley," returned Smalley, with grave emphasis, "Melisent Smalley is as honest a woman as lives by bread; no disparagement to those that are better and honester than she is. Well for ye is it, that she is out of ear-shot, or it would not be fine clothes nor goodly person, saving your honour's presence, that would hold you harmless from a broadside of hard names. Od's flesh, she's a skittle jade, I promise ye; she thinks no more of smacking my mazzard than I do of cracking a louse."

Master Smalley thought it was quite incumbent on him to give this detailed explanation of his wife's good qualities, to compensate for the liberty he took of being somewhat offended at Edward Stanley's drollery. But the young soldier, resolved that the water-bailiff should not escape so easily, cried out, "Fire and faggot, man! thou dost not reckon up half the virtues of thy smashing spouse.

Many's the time I have seen her hurl some half dozen churls to the ground, when she could scarce stand straight for the wet cargo she'd aboard. I've seen her engaged with a score fags at an end, and sink me if I ever saw her cut and run; she's as staunch a sea-boat as ever went beneath canvas — though she staggers under a fresh gale, she'll neither capsize nor leak. Smack thy mazzard! Ay, i'faith, she'll fire away whilst she has mast or yard standing."

"Ay, ay," cried the seaman, who had been present at Stanley's landing, and who had come up during his last speech; "Melly's as bluff about the bows as a Rotterdam shoaler. When the mist is in her topsails, the baily's forced to luff about and stand off."

"She crows over him," continued Stanley, "like a wild kestrel over a cock-sparrow."

"Ay, byr'lady," pursued the seaman, "she makes master's mate of him in a storm; in fair weather, he's like a blue dog in a dark entry."

"He creeps over his own threshold like a draw-latch," said Edward Stanley;

"and reconnoitres the cue of his rib, as a French scout-master would a German camp — sure of finding his enemy snoring or drunk."

"His wife gets the weather-gauge of him when he joins in her cups," cried the seaman; "she drinks the double ale, and forces him to swallow beggar's poison."

"And he would tell us he doth it out of sobriety," continued the soldier; "but hark ye, Lazarus! small beer or spring-water, that's the word, Baily, is it not?"

"He's like the man between the devil and deep sea," pursued the seaman; "and I'll be sworn, he would give his wife to one or t'other without price or fee. An he's not rid of her soon, he must hang himself for quietness."

The water-bailiff, surprised and astonished at the pertinacious attack which had been made upon him, and at the sustained and running fire which had been kept up by his adversaries, presented an indignant and tormented front, first to one and then to the other, endeavouring to break the continuity of the assault, and to return the charge; but, finding he had no

chance of encountering foes so potent with success, he gave up the attempt, and waited patiently the conclusion of their hostilities. And when he found that Edward Stanley did not follow up the discharge of his comrade the seaman, he exclaimed, with a loud voice, "Better be hanged or drowned, burnt or beaten to death, than worried after this fashion, with a host of lies and legends, that have no more truth than either of ye hath modesty. Hanged, quotha; I'd rather be hanged and salted, and sent out as a trading venture to Cannibal-land, than bide the railing of two such termagants as ye are; my ears ring as though I had kept watch in the bell-loft on her majesty's accession — blessed be her name!"

"And cursed be thine, false villain!" cried Stanley, whose gaiety received a sudden check by the water-bailiff's common-place loyalty; "were I near thee, I would drive my dagger into thy throat."

"Mercy be on us!" ejaculated the water-bailiff, aghast at the unlooked for anger of the young soldier; "have I not borne your scoffs and your jeers, your sneerings and revilings, with the patience

and forbearance of a protestant Christian; and as one who hath gathered fruit from the tree of life, and hath drunk of the stream of the fountain of heavenly waters revealed by St. John, whereof you may read, that is if it please ye, in the Bible that is chained to the north pillar in St. Nicholas's chapel."

"Thou eternal prater! get thee hence," cried Edward Stanley, pale with rage; "or silence thy canting bell-clapper."

"And is her right-royal and dignified majesty's liege and faithful subject and officer," continued the water-bailiff, exalted above his common temperament by the affront offered to his person, and by the certainty that he could make his escape before his antagonist could descend from the tower, "to be bullied by your bravoes and soldados, and threatened with the buffet and stab — cursed for a canting and bell-clapping villain — my certe! and for what? — when the worst word I uttered, and few enough I could get out, was better than the best of any spoken in this company."

He had scarcely brought his harangue to a conclusion, when he observed the

wide muzzle of a pistol leisurely extended through the bars of the window, a sight which in a moment deposed his manhood, and obliged him to call for quarter.

"Honoured lord! beloved sir!" cried the water-bailiff, plumping down in the dirt upon his knees, and extending his clasped hands towards the window, "shoot not, as thou hast charity — as thou art endowed with all mercies and benevolences; at least, let me not die by an outlandish weapon; if it were by thy sword or dagger, which are of an English fashion, it would be another matter. Fair, good, worthy Master Edward, put up that abominable dag, as thou lovest heaven."

Chafed and irritated as Stanley was with the presumption, as he deemed it, and the untimely loyalty of the water-bailiff, he could not resist the ridiculous attitude, and absurd address of the petitioner, who continued to implore him for mercy, with silent distortions of his alarmed countenance. But as he wished to continue the tribulation of the penitent, and to afford himself a little more

sport, he did not appear to relent, but applied the spanner to the wheel-lock of his pistol, and kept it levelled upon the body of the officer.

"Thou didst call me bravo," cried Stanley; "and I will show thee the mercy of one: I have slain many a better man than thou art on slighter quarrel."

"But slay not me, let me counsel ye," exclaimed Smalley. "I have no quarrel to you, most excellent Master Edward Stanley; and, besides, I am unworthy to be graced with death by your noble hands."

"I wot thou would'st be more fairly graced by those of the hangman," replied the soldier, scornfully; "but this shall not serve thee now — thou shalt not live to be a reviler of gentlemen henceforth."

"I will not, if ye will suffer me to live," returned the water-bailiff. "Henceforward, both gentle and simple shall curse me, revile me, and tweak me by the nose, and I will show no more resentment by word or deed, than a lamb lacking gall."

"Ho, sirrah!" cried Stanley, to the seaman, "let us see how far he keeps his

word; lend him for me a sound buffet on the ear, and a smart tweak by the nose; such exercise as his wife bestows on him; be not too tender-hearted, the sharper the pain, the better proof of his right conscience."

The seaman, who heartily enjoyed the torment of the officer, obeyed the command of Edward Stanley with such goodwill, that Smalley, like an ox struck by the axe of the butcher, fell prostrate upon the earth; whence, however, he was speedily raised by the application of his executioner's fingers to his snubbed proboscis. The tears ran down his cheeks, one of which was much swelled with the buffet it had received; but the awful muzzle of the pistol still presented itself from the window of the tower, and fascinated his tongue into silence.

"Right well endured," cried Edward Stanley; "by our lady, Smalley, thou art a man of too much mettle to have the rogue's march beat upon thee this bout, and so, honourable cavaliero, let us know what brought thee hither?"

"The devil, for aught I know," ex-

claimed the water-bailiff, whose patience, suffering under his horse-load of flesh, was nigh exhausted; "that is to say, I know not what but the foul fiend could have entrapped me to anger your honour."

"Thou art an arch knave, Lazarus!" returned Stanley; "but thou must come nearer the mark, if thou would'st not be a mark for my pistol. Answer, villain; what intelligence was it thou didst speak of, when I first saw thee?"

"Intelligence!" cried the water-bailiff, with an innocent stare of surprise. "In sooth I know of none, save it be that we are to have a new beacon on Everton hill."

"Curse your beacon!" cried Stanley, frowning fiercely; "but that could not bring thee at four o'clock upon the beach. No trifling, sirrah, as thou valuest thine ears."

"Nay, noble master Edward," said the trembling officer; "I have trifled enough this morning for the rest of my life. I should hold myself worse than a Jesuit, if I told ye a witting lie."

"False knave!" exclaimed Stanley, advancing the pistol further through the casement.

"Heaven be praised! I remember me of the news," interrupted Smalley, springing from the ground, and turning towards the rock, a point of sterile land, which forms the northern extremity of Cheshire, and juts out into the mouth of the Mersey, which is there called Bootle Bay. "The sight of that fearsome dag hath driven away my senses; it grins as if it yawned for my blood!"

"Get on with thy news, thou tedious villain!" cried the young prisoner, "or I will let out his bowels on thy worthless carcass. Make speed, sirrah."

"Why, most charitable sir," replied the water-bailiff, "the news is well enough for news; but bad enough for us whom it concerns. It is as pretty a tale as you would like to hear, more by token, it relates to arms, which are your honour's vocation, as I take it."

"Thou insufferable gossip!" cried the youth, taking aim at the officer; "tell

me in a word what is the object of thy news, or I will riddle thy body."

"A ship, a ship;" replied Smalley, holding up his hand in a deprecating posture.

"Whence came she?" said Stanley, whose curiosity seemed to be awakened.

"From Heaven, for aught I know," returned Smalley.

"Whither is she bound?" cried the soldier.

"To hell, for aught I care," rejoined the officer.

"How com'st thou to know aught of the matter, sirrah?" said Stanley.

"A fisher from the coast of Man came up last night," said Smalley, "and the strange vessel had taken a hand from him, to pilot her in the narrow seas."

"She was a large Spanish carack," said the seaman, "heavy armed, and full of men."

"A Spaniard on the coast!" cried Edward Stanley, turning away from the window.

"Yes, forsooth," cried Smalley, "and I'll soon be off the coast."

Observing that Stanley had withdrawn from the window, the water-bailiff took to his legs, and was speedily out of pistol shot. The young prisoner, after a short consultation with the Jesuit, again turned to the window; and finding that Smalley had escaped him, asked the seaman, who still kept his ground, whether the fisherman who had been boarded by the Spanish vessel was still in port?"

"No," replied the sailor; "he put off again about the first watch; he is gone down to the Great Ormshead."

"Did the vessel fly an ancient?" said Stanley.

"No, she was dark," returned the seaman; "but the fisher held her Spanish by her make and hands. She was high-quartered, and armed with brass cannon; her hands were swarthy and black, like the devil's own children."

The young soldier, frowning on the honest sailor, closed the casement; satisfied with the particulars which he had acquired, and returned to his confederates.

CHAP. V.

The devil knew not what he did, when he made man politic; he crossed himself by't: and I cannot think, but, in the end, the villanies of man will set him clear.

TIMON OF ATHENS.

"By the holy rood," exclaimed Stanley, as he closed the window, "this Spaniard is Pacheco; the white spray hath not stayed his prow; but he comes now too soon."

"Wherefore say you too soon?" said the Jesuit; "when we saw Don Luis at Brussels, he could not then urge on his departure swift enough for your desire."

"Nevertheless his passage hath outrun our fortune," replied the young conspirator, with a dissatisfied brow; "had Earl Derby welcomed our mission, the fiercest tornado that ever blew could not have whirled him hither swifter than my wishes. But—"

"He is our enemy," interrupted the

Jesuit, with an air of apprehension, "and we are—"

"His prisoners," concluded Edward Stanley; "and he will execute justice upon us as traitors to Elizabeth."

"Blut! blut!" cried the German, rising upright in the bed; "betrayed! what say ye?"

"Didst thou not hear?" returned Stanley, coldly.

"Himmelsdonner!" roared the Colonel, highly indignant at the contemptuous air of his colleague; "has thy foolish confidence entrapped us, and makest thou light of our danger? By St. Mary, I wot thou art a hollow-hearted traitor thyself, that has brought us hither, as to the den of the tiger."

The youth, stung with rage at this suggestion, immediately presented the pistol which he held in his hand at his companion, who continued, with undaunted spirit, "Ya, thou art a traitor! or if not, thy fond kinsman will shield thy head, by the sacrifice of ours."

"Thou art under the roof of my fathers," cried Edward Stanley, lower-

ing the pistol; "or by my life I had holden thine as cheap as a daw's feather. There is such a thing as honour, though thou perchance hast never heard on't. It serves with men like Earl Derby for oaths, and the threats of damnation denounced by the priesthood. That I am his son will 'vantage me no more than if I were the son of the Turkish Sultaun."

"Or if it do," said the Jesuit, "so nobly is Earl Derby spoken of for honour and conscience, that I doubt not his charity will extend to all."

"The virgin speed it!" said the German.

"Flatter not your souls with this hope," replied Stanley, "which will burst like an air-borne bubble. I have failed to excite my father's ambition, and his patriotism will award the doom of justice. Besides, he is not our judge; he will deliver us to the queen's officers, who will put us upon trial; and Earl Derby has no greater voice than the meanest subject to sway the jurors' verdict, or the sentence of the law."

"Nein!" exclaimed Sparandam in

great astonishment ; " ye need a change, by the holy virgins of Magdeburg. What, a noble of the first class has no power over the law! wunderbar!"

" Nor have the priesthood in this respect," said the Jesuit, " the least authority even as counsellors, which is worse. England is now rather a pagan republic than a Christian monarchy."

" Mein herz!" pursued the German officer, " it is a community of savages — a horde of Turks and Tartars. But the ship ye spoke of but now, may she not run down and help us off?"

" Ay," replied Edward Stanley, " provided thou canst devise the means of giving her notice of our captivity, and of demolishing some two score of cannon and partridges that are mounted on the walls of the castle, and which would blow Pacheco out of the water before he could level a gun or land a soldier."

" Phiz!" cried the veteran, " if we could get a word to Pacheco, he might land up the shore, and march upon the town."

" His three hundred Spaniards," said

the Jesuit, "would overmatch the town and neighbourhood."

"His three hundred Spaniards!" cried Stanley with a cutting sneer, "would be stoned dead by the very rabble of these shores. Within five miles hence, there are ten thousand as good shots as ever drew elke bow against the king's deer. What, in the devil's name, would your three hundred corselets, though armed with matchlock and pistol, perform against these wights, who are as bold in spirit as your dons, and far stouter in nerve and bone? They would shrink before the clatter of the Lancashire harness."

"The Spaniard shrink!" returned Sparandam, "that has fought up to his knees in blood when the fire burnt the plume off his morion! that has slain his own brother and father to make a mound whereon to march into the enemy's breach! that has encountered earthquake and tornado, tempest by sea and storm by land, as very sport! der teufel! and doest thou think, Stanley, because thy churls are bigger boned and grosser

fed than these veterans, that they are to be mated with them for the strife of battle? thou doest dream — the night hag is upon thee."

"Thou hast never tried English blood," replied the young soldier, "or thou wouldst but hold Spanish courage at its true reckoning, a wild and ferocious spirit, supported only by swelled conceit and vanity. But thou wouldst find in the bull dogs of England that obstinate fortitude and eager thirst of blood which is not to be vanquished, save by their utter slaughter; — they will fight with their jaws distilling gore till the spirit is extinct; — no French songs nor Spanish war cries have they to encourage and cheer their hearts — they need no incitement — they lack no cheering — they go doggedly to the grapple — silent and fierce do they strain to the encounter, and they must be left dead on the field, or the bloody ancient of victory will wave over them."

"Thou art talking of Englishmen in the days of Crecy and Agincourt," said the German; "but your nation has

ceased to be military — the spirit of conquest is fled — discipline is unknown among ye."

"But discipline may be learned when valour cannot," cried Edward Stanley; "a few months of hard service would convert the clowns of England into better soldiers than ever marched under a Spanish banner; that Englishmen of our day are as valiant as their forefathers, shall bear no question where I am present."

"Rather let us turn our attention," said the Jesuit, "to the consideration of means for escaping, than waste time in an idle discussion, which can be of no good consequence even to him that has the better argument."

"I had not wasted time in words, good father," returned Stanley, "nor lacked thy schooling, if any means fair or desperate had chanced for our escape; but, unless thou doest mean escaping by a leaden passport, (holding up the pistol,) I know of none bearing a feasible countenance."

"Are there no outlets from this

chamber;" said the Jesuit, "examining the wainscot."

"None, save that oaken door," replied Stanley, with great composure; "if thou canst force it without noise, we may chance to get down into the hall, and thou wilt have to resume thy labour on the entrance door; then we shall have gained the court, and thou mayest conclude with knocking down the gate. By our lady, thou wilt be a worthy colleague of Sampson and Hercules."

"Young man," returned the Jesuit, gravely, "this is no time for ribbald mockery; we are on an important errand, and our lives are more valuable than those of common men. Saint Peter and holy church have us in their keeping!"

"Right, Sir Priest!" said Edward Stanley, "and he were a vile heretic that did not feel secure under their protection. For my part, I am so filled with confidence of safety, that I shall go to sleep again on the strength of it."

He threw himself on the bed, and laughed heartily, to the great chagrin of

the Jesuit and his military companion. The former, with great bitterness, (for the sarcastic manner of the young soldier had thrown him off his guard,) said, "Knowest thou not, young man, that Heaven is most ready to assist those who are active in their own welfare, and that the sluggish and disobedient are delivered over to their own foolishness and blindness of heart? Rouse thee, Edward Stanley; resume thy nature, which the froward fortune of to-night has tarnished; if thou canst not be successful, at least level not thy vengeance upon the heads of thy friends. Lucifer himself was true to the angels that fell with him."

The Jesuit's oratory was exerted in vain to stimulate the active principle in Edward Stanley. He either knew there was no chance of effecting an escape, or he was resolved to abide the event of his father's reflection. He, therefore, refused to listen to the combined intreaties of the priest, and reproaches of the colonel, both of which were heaped upon him with uncommon profusion and

pertinacity. At length the Jesuit, weary with addressing an insensible object, slackened his exertions; but Sparandam, whose passions were easily blown into a flame, on observing that he could make no impression on his companion, vented a thousand execrations in English and German; and at last, boiling with rage, snatched up his pistol, which Stanley had laid upon the bed, and would have blown out his brains, had he not been interrupted by a noise at the door, occasioned by the drawing back of the bolts. The door opened, and the gentleman of horse, attended by several servants, bearing the morning's provision, entered the room. After having deposited their burthens upon a table, the domestics retired, and left Ormston with the conspirators.

"I am charged by my Lord of Derby," said he, "to require your speedy despatch of breakfast, as he will have ye embark with him forthwith for the isle. He is now at his meal, and will allow ye such measure of time as he uses for refreshment."

After delivering this charge, which the prisoners received with wonderful joy, the gentleman of horse retired, and again barred the door upon them.

"Said I not Saint Peter had us in his keeping?" cried the Jesuit with vehemence. "We shall now be recaptured by Pacheco; the Earl knoweth not of his ambush, and will run into the danger blindfold."

"He runs into no danger, sirs," said Edward Stanley, "or he shall not set foot on ship-board. His noble nature hath revolted at our punishment — he saves us at the hazard of his own life, should our plot come to the queen's ears; and unless ye will promise he and his shall go free from Pacheco, I will warn him of his peril."

"As true as the sun shines in heaven," cried the Colonel, "Pacheco shall hold him harmless — him and his."

"Amen," said the Jesuit. "I cry amen in the Virgin's name. Let us be quit of the thraldom, and whatever pertains to Earl Derby shall be as safe as my own life."

"But what mean you now, Ned Stanley?" said the German. "Since we are blown out of our course, we must go upon a new reckoning. Thou wilt accompany us?"

"No; I will not," replied Stanley; "it is better that we seek adventures apart. I have sailed in your latitude, and find when a storm is up, you cry out upon the pilot for running you into shoal water. I will cruise upon my own tack; when a sail heaves in sight, I will fire a shot for my consorts."

"Thou dost not mean to lay up," said Sparandam inquisitively.

"No; I am sworn to the service," rereturned Stanley, "and I will prove staunch to the last rope and plank. I have still hopes that ye know not of."

"You will do well, son, to reveal them," said the Jesuit; "they cannot concern thee more than they do us. Let me entreat thee to forget the hot words of Colonel Sparandam, which were provoked by thine own frowardness. Let thy mind rest upon the glorious cause we are embarked in, and restore unto us

thy confidence and counsel. Shall the foes of our faith and of thy house's greatness triumph in our want of union? Shall a petty and base quarrel stamp with dissolution one of the wisest and most righteous designs that ever was begot by the wit of man? Let it not be said, Edward Stanley, that thou hadst a soul to conceive, and hardihood to attempt a perilous business, but that thy conduct in its execution was too shallow to bring it unto achievement."

The young conspirator, though he easily discerned the motive of this harsh lecture, could not refrain from blushing with shame at the homely truths which it held out to him. He had been hitherto blinded with passion, whose evidences, like the broken and dispersing clouds after a thunder-storm, still lingered upon his features; but he now saw the folly and impolicy of protracting a reconciliation with his companions, at least if he expected to derive any benefit from their counsel, and from the force connected with their mission. But the high-stilted honour of the young cavalier would not

suffer him to make the first inclination towards an adjustment with Colonel Sparandam, from the humiliation of which he was, however, happily delivered, by the German saying, with hearty good humour, (caused no doubt by the prospect of deliverance,) "Mein herz und seele, here is my hand, Ned Stanley; it has backed thy quarrel before now; and before it should draw weapon on thy life, I would hack it off the length of my pouldron. Sink every word that gave thee offence, and if thou canst not forget them, lay thine anger on the crests of the heretics. We will draw blows for the hardest in the first battle."

"Agreed, fellow-soldier," replied Edward Stanley, giving his hand to the German, who received, and shook it with great warmth, "we will henceforth have no contest, but who shall do most manfully in the fight. Our foes shall bear witness of our friendship."

"Der teufel," cried Sparandam, "we will write versöhnung on their corselets in letters of blood."

"But now for thy hopes, son," said the Jesuit impatiently; "we may be interrupted, and fortune may not give us another chance of communication."

"Thus are they," said Stanley: "my father has a friend, whose power, may it be roused into action, is great enough to raise an unquenchable flame in this kingdom. He is a faithful son of the church, and, though somewhat stricken in years, is surpassed by none in quickness of counsel and fiery resolution."

"Whom mean ye?" said the Jesuit.

"Sir George Vernon," answered Stanley; "by the commonalty styled King of the Peak. He lives at Haddon, on the Wye, in Derbyshire."

"Right well do I mind me of the place," said the Jesuit, "for I was born and bred but a short distance from Haddon Towers. In the lovely Monsal dale drew I first my breath; and there, if they be not extinct, are my kinsfolk living."

"Then thou canst well judge of the wide-extended rule of the doughty knight," said Stanley; "for fear or fa-

vour he can raise ten thousand soldiers, and so he do raise them, it matters not to us, be it by the spell-wand of a wizard and the fiend's help."

"But knowest thou he is like to join us?" said the Jesuit. "Is he surer than Earl Derby?"

"He is scarce so honest," replied Stanley, "and more ambitious. Let the extreme shadow of a ray of royalty shine upon this nominal king, and he will leap without looking into the gulf of hell for its achievement. My brother, Sir Thomas Stanley, is even now at Haddon, paying his court to Sir George's younger daughter, the Lady Margaret Vernon. Thither will I go too, and I will so incite him with the hope of our father's exaltation, that he shall do as I will have him, despite all bars and obstacles. I know him thoroughly — have tempted and proved him — he is ours. From this moment count upon him as a staunch adherent to the cause."

"O! brave!" exclaimed the German, rubbing his hands, "these news are like a horn of Nantz; they give fire to the

heart, like the explosion of a partridge."

"Before a month is run out," cried Edward Stanley; "they shall give fire to many hearts, that now dream of nought so little."

"And until your plot be matured," said the Jesuit, "what would you have us do? Where shall we tarry? Pacheco cannot remain on the coast without certain discovery."

"I would neither have him nor you tarry here now," answered Stanley; "I will find means of communicating all matters necessary for your knowledge, by the same channel as we fixed upon for the information of the Spanish government."

"But would not the soldiers be useful to you?" said the Jesuit.

"They would rather be an impediment," answered Stanley; "for unless we were joined by some chieftain whose fortress lay upon the coast, there would be no chance of their landing. Let the game be up, and we will then give the hunter's call."

"If, then, Pacheco board your father's pinnace," said the Jesuit, "as he will, doubtless, since he commands the mouth of the port, you would have us quit you to the earl."

"Ay, even so," replied Stanley; "ye may entreat me with ardent importunity to share your fortunes; and I, for the love I bear my father, will slight your counsel. Spare not your talent; the better actors ye prove, the firmer hold shall I get of the good earl's confidence."

"And despair not," said the Jesuit, "of gaining him over to our party: dropping water wears the rock: a word in season hath its weight, though heedlessly caught and slowly digested."

Their conversation was abruptly broken off by the return of the gentleman of horse, who came with a number of attendants to conduct his prisoners to the pinnace, which had been hauled up into the basin of the court-yard. Edward Stanley and his companions were not long in equipping themselves, although Colonel Sparandam was but half-dressed on Ormston's arrival. Their

cloaks, hats, and boots, were speedily assumed, and in a few minutes they found themselves in the great hall, and in the presence of the earl, whose distant and haughty demeanour imposed an awe and sobriety even upon the rough and warlike spirit of the German. To the low salutation of the Jesuit and Edward Stanley, and the less ceremonious inclination of Sparandam, Lord Derby replied by merely touching his hat, an act of courtesy much less gracious than he used towards the meanest of his officers; and it was the more keenly felt by the conspirators, when compared with the affable, generous, and sweet deportment with which they could not fail to observe he received all other persons, gentle and simple, the humble or the elevated. The settled frown which his features wore, when turned upon them, appeared like a visor assumed on this particular occasion, and which ill-fitted and ill-became a countenance denoting in every feature the reverse of pride, or insolence of spirit. The Jesuit, however, bore this lack of complacency with his accustomed meek-

ness and humility. He affected a countenance of melancholy mortification, which must have softened bowels of stone, had they not been hardened by distrust, and an apprehension of knavery, as were the earl's. But the German Colonel, (whose patience was not of so good proof as his corselet or head-piece,) though he did not dare to express his resentment by an open attack upon his host, fully developed his chagrin in an hundred quick marches across the hall floor, and ten thousand twitches of the muscles of his face; evolutions so curious and remarkable, that they caused great amusement among the younger retainers of the earl's household. As for Edward Stanley, though he seemed the most gloomy and heart-stricken of the three prisoners, in reality he diverted himself with the different appearances which the several characters of his colleagues exhibited, and laughed heartily in his sleeve at the hypocritical melancholy of the Jesuit, and at the honest and irrepressible vexation of the German. His mirthful propensity was by no means

lessened, when the Colonel, after wearying himself with the exertion of striding to and fro in his heavy boots, stopped short opposite the place where the Earl was standing, in conversation with his almoner, and, with a grin of unutterable rage, cried out, "My Lord Earl, I am a Baron of Hainault, of a noble and ancient family. I am an officer of rank in the army of his Majesty the King of Spain; and yet, der feind, you treat me like a dog — like an earthworm you trample on me, or a vassal without blood or lineage. I am your prisoner, if ye will have it so; but der teufel, I am a gentleman, and when the weather is fair I will hold you to satisfaction for my affronts."

The Earl, without condescending to notice this speech otherwise than by a broad stare, and a slight smile of derision, continued to converse with his almoner; and the Colonel, hopeless of gaining a present reparation to his wounded honour, recommenced his exercise with a silent gnashing of the teeth. He was speedily joined by the Jesuit, who lec-

tured him sharply upon the folly of further provoking the Earl's indignation, which they had once escaped; but the German paid no attention to his counsel, and pushed him rudely out of the track of his career.

At length the Earl was informed that the pinnace was ready for their embarkation; upon which intelligence he advanced into the court, and ordered his gentleman of horse to see the prisoners safe on board; a command that was forthwith executed. He instantly followed, attended by his officers; and the little vessel, hoisting her sails, gently hove out of the tower-basin.

CHAP. VI.

Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm,
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes,
Youth on the prow and pleasure at the helm,
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
That hush'd in grim repose expects his ev'ning prey.
GRAY.

THE morning sketched by the fancy of Gray, was the prototype of that on which Earl Derby's pinnace left the tower. The broad arm of the sea, and the shores on either side, covered with a rosy hue, fairly laughed under the beams of the new risen sun, whilst the jutting rocks and promontories gave a finish to the whole scene by their powerful display of the chiaro oscuro. The waves, gently touched by the soft zephyr, rippled slightly beneath the cut-water of the boat, and dashed their tiny spray over her side; but the wide expanse of the

waters, framed in the golden sands, presented an unbroken and gorgeous mirror, in which the sun seemed delighted to behold his refulgence. The birds of prey, with which the shores were darkened, had already begun to exercise their daily avocations. The long-legged heron, with his curved and elastic neck, stalked slowly in advance of the feathered array, with eye intent upon the water, whilst, every minute, some poor inhabitant of the shallows fell into his voracious maw, and, after a writhing shake, passed into his over-gorged stomach; and in seeking to esape from this tyrant, the innocent fishes, swarming too near the shore, fell victims to the appetite of the black cormorant or greedy gull, which were ever on the watch for that prey which escaped the bill of their leader.

At first, the pinnace made little way, being carried along by the mere impulse of the tide, which, near the shore, had but small power over her; but as she advanced into the main stream of the river, the current, setting strongly out, bore her onward with increased velocity. The

wind also, when she had cleared the mouth of the Mersey, and had got out into Bootle Bay, blew much stronger, or, to use a sea-phrase, freshened, and the waves making a greater resistance to the progress of the vessel, threw a heavier spray over her prow, which showed against the sun like a fairy robe of gauze spangled with gems and silver. The Earl's pennon, which had hitherto drooped upon the deck, now expanded its folds, and stretched out its full length to the breeze, whilst the sails, which before had hung like the clothes of "a lean and slippered pantaloon," bellied out to the extent of their canvas, and laid the vessel with her gunwale to the water. Thus ploughing the waves, she speedily left the shores of Lancashire, and standing out from the rock, entered that difficult passage among the shoals and flats which forms a better protection to Liverpool against a foreign enemy than a thousand batteries of cannon. But the shoals were well known to the skilful and experienced mariners of the pinnace; who, in their frequent voyages to the Isle

of Man, had become so familiar with every point of land, sand-bank, and flat, as to assign to each its separate name. The boat scudded before the wind, regardless of the Beggar's Patch, of Hoyle Bank, or Burbo Flat, (by such names were some of the shoals designated,) and crossing the mouth of the Dee, passed by the shore of Flint, and bore away towards the Ormsheads.

From the time of their departure from Liverpool, the gentleman of horse had kept a strict, though secret, watch over the prisoners; the Earl having some fears that they might attempt an escape by leaping overboard and swimming to the shore. By Lord Derby's order, therefore, Ormston had placed a sentinel, armed with a match-lock, at the door of his cabin, apparently for state, but, in reality, to overawe the conspirators, who were suffered to walk the deck without opposition. This precaution was, nevertheless, soon observed by Edward Stanley, who whispered it into the ear of his companions, as a proof that his father

was still unacquainted with the proximity of the Spanish vessel.

"Had he known that which we know," said the youth, smiling, "instead of one harquebuss he would have had five-score. By my faith, I could master that fellow's arm before he could blow his match and clap it to his touch-hole."

"And he must then fire without ball," said the German, "for he is making his shot into sugar-plumbs; — he holds them in his mouth."

"How awkwardly the knave handles his rest," continued Stanley, "he carries it as if it burnt his fingers."

"He should make a culverin of his matchlock," cried Sparandam; "it is big enough to knock down your father's tower; it is a horse's load itself."

"Rather an ass's, an thou wilt keep to thy text," replied the youth; "but he might swivel it on the quarter, it would serve to salute Pacheco if he come under our stern."

"Knowest thou where it is likely we shall come up with Pacheco?" said the Jesuit.

"If he get not into the hands of a knave," answered Stanley, "we may chance, with fair sailing, to run upon him some two hours hence: but if his pilot prove tricksey, we may fall upon him on the flats."

"Tricksey!" cried Sparandam, "if your pilot plays Pacheco otherwise than fairly, he'll soon have a view of the coast from the mast-head. The Spaniard's a dealer of judgment."

"And I wot of execution beside," said Stanley; "he will not be over-scrupulous about his warrant: a Spanish commission has as great a latitude as a rover's licence — they neither of them sail by the book."

"And if they did," returned the German officer, "the trade of war would be a bad one for gentlemen adventurers. Even your protestants, that stand so tickle upon conscience, and a heap of new-begotten jargon, will live as they can when their banner's spread."

"Ay, even so," said Edward Stanley; "war throws us back upon our state of nature: the birds and beasts that have

never been reclaimed, live upon one another; the strong rend the weak, and the fierce tear the gentle. Why should not we, then, according to the nature implanted in us, feed and fatten upon those that are weaker and less valiant than ourselves? By my life, I never behold a sleek and lazy coward but my heart yearns to strike him dead. Give me a man whose restless soul doth ever keep him in action; and though his name be blurred by ten thousand blood-spots, yet will I hold him to my heart as a fast friend.— I am that man's brother for life and death."

"Der teufel!" cried the German officer, regarding Stanley with a frozen glance, "I will recommend all the cut-throats in Europe to thy patronage — they are active enough, by St. Mary."

"No one should breathe in this bustling world," continued the young desperado, gazing on the swell of the waves, "whose breast is not as tumultuous, and as incapable of bondage, as these wild billows. Let shallow-brained fools trust to the calm upon my brow for their

security, and be wrecked in the storm when they least fear its approach. It would glad my soul to see a heartless, quaking milk-sop looking wild at the rising storm, and catching at every straw of hope, while the waves were foaming to the heavens, and yawning an abyss like the crater of hell under his feet: Oh! the very look of heart-bursting agony which the wretch would cast up to the skies as his frail bark vanished beneath him, would make me, were I his comrade, sink into the roaring deep, bursting with laughter."

"Saint James intercede for us!" exclaimed the Jesuit, with a trembling voice, as he first looked upon the ruffled countenance of his companion, and then upon the sea and heaven. "Forbear, son, to utter thy cold-blooded, thy deadly expressions of malignity. If thou wouldst not, indeed, see the hand of retribution engulf us in the waves, I say, forbear. The fiends of hell must shudder at thy depravity."

"Thou didst not take me for a saint," said Stanley, "when thou didst engage

me to work treason against my country. It was not the voice of the patriot calling on his brothers to deliver their native soil from the clutches of a tyrant. Thy interest, as well as mine, carnal, sordid, vile, temporal gain, was the basis of our compact. We intend reaping where we have sown: we did not sow the winds!"

"But the whirlwind may scatter us," returned the priest, "if respect for decency and justice be departed from us. Oh, son! remember there is an eye upon us which we cannot avoid; a power above us, that turneth man to destruction: by his wrath are we troubled, and by his anger are we withered and consumed."

"By thine own fears and superstition is thy heart withered and consumed," cried Stanley, with a look of derision. "What! I warrant now thou dost await with trembling expectance the yawning of the sea to punish ye all for my sake. I am another Jonas, and ye will be anon for shipping me overboard to the northern whale. Now would I give my life for the spell-ward of a wizard; I would

raise up a storm that should rouse old ocean from his deepest caverns, that should blot out yon flaring sun with a veil of dark waters, and scoop the waves out of their channel, until our pinnace lay dry among the reptiles that crawl at the bottom of the sea. The lightning thou hast yet seen, and the thunder thou hast yet heard, should seem to that I would call into action but like the flash and report of a petronel, whilst the earth, taking part in our affray, should vomit forth rocks and mountains in scorn of the Titanian combat. Then, most holy father, would I gaze upon thy terrors, and mark the courage thy piety could arm thee withal; then would I sit in thine ear, and yell forth comfort to thy palsied soul."

"Thou art sure no living man," cried the Jesuit, affrighted at the desperate language of his companion; "but some devilish fiend that hath assumed the semblance of my friend, for our destruction? To ordinary peril I can expose a front as calm as any man, whose heart is not of stone; but the hellish delight thou

wouldst take in the tortures of thy fellow men, I confess it, thrills me with horror and dismay."

"Thou knowest, Ned Stanley," said Colonel Sparandam, "that I am not one of those bullies that with hectoring words doth keep a clean blade; my hand hath always outrun my tongue, as befitted a soldier and a man of honour; but, as I ever hope to see yon sun shine on me again, thy words hath curdled my heart's blood; they have done that which blood, and fire, and famine could not effect. Long have I held thee a reckless and dangerous companion, but I still deemed that thy feelings were human. Though a man be a traitor and a renegade, he has still a shrewd gulph to leap before he become a fiend — a hell-kite such as thou art."

Had Edward Stanley retained aught of humanity about his character, the free and uncompromising speech of the German would have aroused his wrath; but, as if Sparandam's words had conveyed praise instead of censure, the youth caught him by the hand, and

burst forth into a laugh, without exhibiting the slightest mark of disgust or resentment: this turn of his humour, however, operated favourably upon the mind of the German, who fancied both the Jesuit and himself had been the dupes of their companion's playfulness; and this thought banished from his mind the whole impression of Stanley's enormity. But the Jesuit, whose penetration was deeper than that of the Colonel, and whose suspicions, when once excited, were not easily laid at rest, continued for some time to cast glances of horror upon his daring comrade, and to tremble convulsively at the remembrance of his depravity. The young soldier himself, whose observation was not to be surpassed when his mind was cool and undisturbed, having noted the evil impression which his bravadoes had wrought upon his companions, now laboured to erase it, by sustaining that idea which he saw, at a glance, had taken possession of the German; and so well did he succeed, by entirely changing his discourse, that the indignant feelings

of Sparandam were thoroughly subdued, and his natural blunt and hearty humour came round to its accustomed bias. He had scarcely time, however, to regain his comrade's confidence, before an event happened which directed their attention to another quarter. The boat having run as near the shore as possible to avoid the great sand-bank called Burbo Flat, now changed her course, and tacking about, stood out into the Irish Channel. But she had not lost sight of the bank when the mariners observed a large vessel, apparently a ship of war, hoisting her sails, and heaving her anchor behind a small promontory on the Welsh coast, which had screened her from them as they advanced. There was an evident bustle on her deck as the pinnace appeared, and presently two shots were fired into the air in the manner of a salute, to which the gunner of the pinnace replied by a like discharge. The Earl and his attendants now came upon deck to learn the cause of this salutation, and whilst they were conversing, the stranger bore out from the shore, and

being a very fast sailer, speedily came within pistol-shot of the pinnace, which she hailed, and ordered to bring to.

"Ha!" cried the Earl jocularly, "this Captain would inform us of his authority if we knew it not. What would he with us?"

The Captain of the pinnace hailed the stranger in return, and enquired her object; but she only replied by running alongside the boat, which seemed a cockle-shell in comparison with her height and bulk. Her commander, elegantly clad, appeared at the gangway, attended by his officers, and in tolerable English, enquired if the pinnace did not belong to the Earl of Derby, to which the Captain of the boat replied in the affirmative.

"Is the Lord Derby on board?" said the officer.

"Yea, Don Luis," cried Sparandam, "and so are we."

"Ha, my Colonel!" cried the Spaniard, "Santiago be lauded — ye are well met, noble Signior Edward! my right hand is eager to grasp you; and father

Paul! your blessing be on me; I will descend and present my obeisance to the honourable Earl."

"Hold, sir," cried Lord Derby, who now perceived the understanding which subsisted between his prisoners and the commandant, "I will not have ye set foot on bark of mine, until I know who you are, and what ye do upon this coast. I see the vessel is one of his Spanish Majesty's; if ye come as a friend to England and to our royal Queen, and you need supplies, you shall have them, as far as my means will furnish ye; but if, as I misdoubt, you are here on a hostile errand, I will oppose ye whilst this frail boat will hold together. King Philip has not declared war against England, I will therefore, till I am better informed, repute his officers my friends; but I caution ye to beware of treachery, as you shall answer it."

"I will answer to my Sovereign," replied Don Luis, with a smile, "and not to Earl Derby. But how is this, Colonel; I see ye in company with this lord, and yet we are not friends?"

"These persons are my prisoners — they are in my custody, as offenders against the state and policy of England," cried the Earl.

"Saint Lawrence forbid!" said the Spaniard, with perfect composure, "but you did say, but now, that war subsisted not between Spain and England. This is true, and therefore it is marvellous that the subjects of Spain should be prisoners to an English authority."

"The law of nations will not protect spies and incendiaries," cried Lord Derby, "and such are these: — they came into England with the avowed purpose of exciting rebellion against her Majesty's government. What answer make ye to this?"

"None," replied the Spanish officer: "questions of law and regulations of policy I leave to statesmen. But I have that on my side which is better than argument, signior, I mean power, and I must exercise it in the retaking of your prisoners."

"At your peril, then, be it," cried Lord Derby; "it will be a violation of

the peace which exists between the countries, and a declaration of war on his Spanish Majesty's behalf."

"Let his Majesty then answer it — it is no business of mine," answered the commandant. "If there be war, 'twill be better for men of the sword. But come, gentlemen, I await your company."

"This insult shall not sleep unavenged, by St. Bride!" cried the Earl with great indignation: "had my vessel been of half your strength, your ceremony I'll be sworn would have been the greater."

"To a wavering catholic, and one that has not the spirit to assume his right, signior Earl," retorted the commandant, "there needs no ceremony — generosity would be thrown away — would be lost upon him. Before a man expects to receive honour, he should deserve it."

"Thou art a swelled and insolent ruffian by my faith," exclaimed Lord Derby: "by thy breeding I should take thee to be a buccaneer, rather than an officer of a mighty kingdom."

"Thou wouldst not be the first man of name," said the Spaniard, coolly, "that

I have hanged upon the yard-arm of his own bark; and now, signior Earl, it is my friendship for thy gallant son, that bids me pardon thine intemperance. Rail on, good gray-beard, it is thine age's privilege. Come, signior Edward, mount the side."

"No, Don Luis," answered Stanley, "I stay with my father. Sparandam and Father Paul will do well to join you; but our misssion has failed, and our intercourse is at an end."

"Thou art bewitched or sore cozened, signior cavalier," returned the Spanish officer; "what! wilt thou give up thy golden hopes, and sink into obscurity for a word,—loyalty,—which any clown may tear the wind withal, that dare not hold up his hand against the sun?"

"Follow your course, Don Luis," said Stanley, abruptly, "when I need counsel I will apply to your master. — Colonel and Father, farewell — we part for ever."

Without any opposition from the Earl, who was, in fact, glad to be rid of his prisoners, the German Colonel and the

Jesuit ascended the side of the Spanish vessel, whose commander, stung with the haughty answer of Edward Stanley, laid his hand upon his sword, and muttered a threat of vengeance upon the young soldier. But he was quickly informed, by a significant glance from the Jesuit, that his anger was ill-timed, and he bade the Earl and his retinue farewell with a good grace and cool countenance.

The Spanish vessel now crowded sail, and moving majestically over the waters, bore away towards the Ormsheads, to double the island of Anglesea. The Earl of Derby, irritated as he was at the insolence of the Spanish commander, could not forbear to admire the beautiful proportion of his vessel, which was much larger, and more elegantly fitted and adorned, than any ship in the English navy. She was indeed a moving fortress, bearing upon her quarter-deck or upper gallery, a strong wooden tower, gilt and painted after a superb fashion, for the purpose of containing the soldiers, who thence discharged their fire-arms, cross-bows, long-bows, and other implements

of missile warfare. She also carried about sixty guns, chiefly brass ordnance, and some of which were twin or double cannon, besides about fourteen light culverines planted upon the gallery-tower. Altogether, she was a ship of amazing force, and such an one as, at that period, no other nation than Spain could have set out. Her commander had taken the precaution to fly a private flag, so that in case (as it happened) his voyage should prove unsuccessful, the honour and good faith of his master might not be implicated.

As Edward Stanley's cunning had discerned, so it fell out, that his voluntary abandonment of his comrades appeared to his father a thorough atonement for his having leagued with them; and the manner in which he had treated the taunting scoff of the Spanish commander, (by which he in some measure redeemed the honour of the Earl,) and the anger evinced by Don Luis, completed the deception. After a full and formal explanation, in which Stanley with apparent candour deplored his disloyalty, the Earl

dismissed his anger and chagrin, and again rested his confidence on the son of his heart; and to do justice to the character of this extraordinary youth, if he might be said to have any affection which did not centre in self, that affection was bestowed solely on his father, on whom nevertheless he thought it no impiety to practise any imposition, so that it tended to the Earl's earthly aggrandisement, and his own relative exaltation.

The summer sun had blazed fiercely upon the waters until the departure of the Spanish vessel, when, as it frequently happens on those coasts, the sky became overcast; one little cloud, which had long hovered over head unobserved but by the experienced mariner, was the precursor of the change, and it was succeeded by a number of dense and lowering thunder-packs, which boded a wild and terrific hurricane. The atmosphere gradually thickened, until the sky was darkened to the very edge of the horizon, and the sea, in concert with the portentous aspect of the heavens, assumed an

awful stillness of motion. The Earl's attendants could now observe the Spanish mariners busied in taking in their sails, and making all clear for the impending storm, for the wind having sunk entirely, the ship had made little way, and now floated like a log upon the water. This sullen quietude did not, however, remain of long continuance; one flash of deep red and forked lightning intersected the whole blackened canopy of heaven; and it was followed by a thunder-clap, so loud, so awful, and terrific, that not only did it appal the heart of the stoutest mariner, but gave an actual impetus to the sea, whose waves seemed to rush upon the shore like a devouring foe. The water was now covered with foam; each successive wave was crested with a white plume, which made the oblique parts of it appear the more dark and dismal. The sea-fowl, in the mean time, flew round the vessels, uttering piercing screams, and dived into the watery element, to avoid the terrors of the aerial storm. In a short time the tempest,

"mounted on the wings of the wind," became universal. The lightnings flashed, the thunder roared, and the wind and waves howled in most tremendous concert. The sea ran "mountains high," and each vessel was alternately borne up to the heavens, and whelmed in the abysses of the ocean.

CHAP. VII.

Clown. I would, you did but see how it chafes, how it rages, how it takes up the shore! but that's not to the point: O, the most piteous cry of the poor souls! sometimes to see 'em, and not to see 'em: now the ship boring the moon with her main-mast; and anon swallowed with yest and froth, as you'd thrust a cork into a hogshead.

WINTER'S TALE.

IT is by no means an easy matter to depict a storm at sea, to those who have not witnessed its actual terrors. To a tempest on shore it has no resemblance, or, at least, is quite as dissimilar as the thunder and hail storms of our temperate climate are to the dire and devastating tornadoes of South America. The former serve but to purify the atmosphere, and to give a freshened and re-invigorated look to nature; whilst, in the latter, the angel of desolation seems to stalk abroad, holding thunders, and lightnings, and earthquakes, in his grasp; and bidding the nations tremble at his withering

approach. Palaces, temples, and cities, nay, rocks and mountains, are levelled before him; and thousands of victims are consumed in the dreadful sweep of his fury. Happily, fellow-countrymen! it is not our lot to witness the march of this terrific spirit. He walks in his wrath around the shores of our isle, causing shipwreck to the adventurous mariner; but his legation extends no further than our shores; from our dwellings he keeps aloof, and leaves us to bless our own stars, that we are not subject to his influence, and to bewail the loss of those poor men who seek their bread upon the waters. But to return to our narrative.

The gloomy sky now broke in several places, appearing to open the gates of the heavens for the free passage of the rain, which fell in continuous plashes of water, and added to that element which already was too powerful. The little pinnace staggered under the incessant water-spout, and her deck, flooded with the rain and the spray which every minute made a complete breach over her, presented an appearance little more con-

solatory than the raging deep. The sails of the Spanish vessel, which could sometimes be seen from the pinnace, perched on the top of a "sky kissing" wave, were rent into thousands of rags, and her mizen mast, with the main sail and yards attached to it, had already gone by the board. The condition of the pinnace was not yet so deplorable, for though every giant surf threatened to stave in her timbers, yet her lightness and buoyancy enabled her to surmount every breaker, and to ride high upon the water, when the Spaniard rolled in the trough of the sea.

Both vessels had been driven by the wind back upon their course, and they now found themselves in the worst of all bad situations, among the flats and shoals at the mouth of the Mersey. The Spanish mariners, struck with horror at the sight of their danger, commenced a universal discharge of their incumbrances. Brass ordnance, store-chests, and the effects of the officers, were thrown overboard by the seamen, without the least remorse; their own chests followed, to-

gether with all such matters of the provision store as impeded the working of the vessel, or added to her burden; and, at last, finding all other ways of lightening her ineffectual, the remaining masts were cut away and heaved into the sea. But all was now too late. The vessel was lighter indeed, and in an open sea would probably have outridden the gale, but she was now only the more easily driven by the impulse of the waves: and to crown their ill-fortune, a furious surf, breaking over the stern of the ship, burst in the dead-lights of her cabin, and tore the rudder from its holdfast. A fearful cry, heard by the crew of the pinnace above the roar of the tempest, followed this seal upon their fate; and the vessel, urged with the velocity of lightning, was in a minute swamped on Burbo Flat, upon which she continued to beat with dreadful violence, until her timbers parted asunder amid the breakers. It was clear that the greater part of the crew must have perished; but whether or not any persons had saved themselves in the boats, it was not possible for the crew of

the pinnace, on account of the high swell of the waves upon the bank, to discover. If, even, some few had succeeded in getting into the boats, the furious surf upon the shore, and the intervention of shoals, unknown to the Spanish mariners, rendered it almost hopeless that they should escape the fate of their companions.

But those on board the pinnace had not time to gaze upon the ruin of the other vessel, or to bewail the lot of its crew: they had sufficient employment in taking those measures which seemed most prudent and proper for avoiding the occurrence of a like mishap to their own bark; and the very exertions which fear dictated, appeared to banish that passion from every heart. The sails were taken in, and the little sea-boat now scudded over the brine with bare poles. The deck was cleared; and those persons of the Earl's suite whose presence was not necessary for the working of the pinnace, were confined to the cabin. It was at this time that Edward Stanley showed he was not a boasting Bobadil, made up

of big and hollow words. With the greatest composure, and with a cheerful countenance, he stood upon the deck, and talked to the sailors as indifferently as if the sun had been shining, and the pinnace running steadily under a moderate gale. His bold manner and undaunted look gave heart to his shipmates, and cheated them of reflection upon the surrounding danger, whilst his own courage and presence of mind enabled him to keep on the look-out, and to assist the helmsman in keeping clear of the shoals and rocks with which they were environed. For this service Edward Stanley was well qualified, not only by his fortitude and activity in the midst of perils, but also by that smack of nautical knowledge which most of the noble youth, about this period, sought to acquire, in order to qualify themselves for the command of any naval expedition; and in which he was more than usually versed, by reason of his having, though still so young, already served in several enterprizes of this nature. With the steady legs of a veteran mariner, he walked the deck, holding on as

the waves broke over the vessel, and making a jest of the raging billows which yawned to entomb them.

"By my faith, Gower," cried he to the master of the bark, "we were sun-roasted this morning, but now we shall be boiled in cold water. Ho! a rock a-head! hard a-weather — if we crack the perch we shall find no kernel."

"We shall find black rocks and running sea," returned the hard-featured son of Neptune; "if a man has a mind of the long run he needs not go farther — let him to it boldly, and he'll find his locker ready built. — Hold on, the breakers."

"Yon poor devils," said Stanley, looking towards the place where the Spanish vessel foundered, "have gained the port with a lee-lurch — they're food for fishes — carrion for the sea-crow; one honest fellow has often been drowned in red wine, he'll now have learnt the taste of salt-water."

"Yon Spaniard," cried the master, "has done with his turkey-cock tricks. He walked the deck like a goose in a farthingale — he conn'd as much about

working a ship as I do of patching my wife's petticoat. By Saint Nicholas, I thought we had weathered the gale, but the squall's heavier. Helm a-lee, villain, or we're swamped — keep her head to the wind."

"We're nigh upon the shore," said Edward Stanley, "if we could run her into smooth water."

"Smooth water!" exclaimed the seaman; "there'll be no smooth water till the squall abates; the surf now runs as high as the mast-head upon the shore — look out — we're on the beach now."

He ran with breathless haste to the helm, but it was too late to turn the head of the pinnace, which was wedged into the sand, and her stern, lifted up by the waves which broke over her, raised a dozen yards above her forecastle. The surf, receding for a moment, left the vessel dry upon the sand; but again returning with an increase of force, caused her to strike furiously upon the beach.

All the persons on board, frenzied above the power of restraint, now rushed upon deck, and, wild with the prospect

of destruction, called out to Heaven for mercy, and abandoned themselves to the most frightful despair. Neither by threats, entreaties, nor even by blows, could Edward Stanley and the mariners, who alone retained their collected senses, induce those of the Earl's suite who could render no assistance, to await some turn of fortune in the cabin. They were deprived of reason, feeling, — indeed of all sense but that of horror. By continued beating upon the shore, the pinnace at length broke her back, and the water flowing through the breach, threatened to cause an instantaneous separation between her fore and aft quarters. There was now no time to be lost, the vessel was going to pieces, and they were upon a desert coast, where no assistance could be obtained. The surf broke upon the shore like a glassy wall, at least one hundred yards higher up the beach than where the pinnace was bedded in the sand, whilst the breakers rushed over her topmast, and carried away several of the Earl's attendants who could not lay hold of any thing for sup-

port, and buried them in a stormy grave. The despair of their companions, as they saw the raging sea swallow up their comrades, cannot be distinctly imagined. Many wrung their hands and beat their breasts in silent agony, most shrieked aloud, whilst some, as if fascinated by the devouring enemy, plunged overboard, and "sank, to rise no more." The frail bark, at last, gave way to the roaring torrent, and the stern, parting from the forecastle, was borne by a giant billow within forty or fifty yards of the shore. Upon this section of the vessel was the Earl, his son, and many of his chief attendants. The mariners and the inferior officers of the Earl were left upon the forecastle, the ruin of whom seemed now past doubt, especially as the sea ran into the hold, and had begun, already, to break up the planks of the deck, the only frail footing of the unfortunate sufferers.

The Earl of Derby, whose courage had supported him with dignity throughout this awful scene, was more attentive to console his domestics than careful about his own safety, of which, indeed,

there was little expectation. He conjured them with the fervour of a patriarch, to trust in God, who could rescue them even then, if he saw good, from their merciless adversary; but if it were his will that they should perish, "Remember," continued he, "that we are not the only sufferers in this day of peril. How many souls have gone down in the Spaniard, with less of warning to prepare their accounts than we have! and it is not the soul that will perish — our bodies may fall a sacrifice to this gaping sea, but our souls will spring up from amid the waves to the Lord of life and glory."

Whilst he was yet busied in consoling his domestics, Edward Stanley approached him, stripped to his shirt and netherstocks, and holding in his hand a rope, which he had cut from some part of the rigging.

"Come, my Lord!" said he, "let us exert ourselves; fortune may aid us to gain the shore; throw off your bonnet and mantle, and fasten this rope round your body."

"Nay, Ned," replied his father; "I

will die with my people; if we cannot all be saved, let us all sink together."

"Not so, dear Lord," cried Ormston, who was near his master; "leave us; if you escape, we shall die content; come, sir, your mantle and hat."

"By St. Bride I will not, John Ormston," returned the Earl; "I were unworthy the love of my friends, if I could abandon them in this peril."

"You shall not abandon them," said Stanley; "it is the only way to secure their safety; an example is wanting, and in every bold achievement, who should lead the way but Earl Derby? Let your people see you on the shore, and courage will lend them wings to follow."

"Ay, but I doubt," said the Earl; "whether these old limbs can make their way through the heavy surf; thou had'st better let me die surrounded by my servants."

"Can Earl Derby fear?" cried his son.

"Nay, lead on," answered the venerable peer; "I will follow thee."

The youth, when his father had cast

aside his hat and mantle, fastened the rope round his body, but not so tightly as to prevent the insertion of his own arm between both; and thus advancing to the gunwale of the wreck, the bold pair awaited with calm fortitude the next swell of the surf. In a moment it came roaring on, like a lion in his wrath, overwhelming the wreck, to which the sufferers were forced to cling for protection; and when it had passed, and they could number one another on the tottering planks, the gallant father and son had disappeared. All eyes were now turned towards the shore, but the restless boil of the waves, as they dashed madly onward, effectually prevented the sight of those on board either part of the wreck, from penetrating so far. At length the waters receded, and the crew and domestics beheld Edward Stanley raise his father in his arms from the still water, and run with him until he had attained a spot upon the beach that was high and dry. A loud shout of congratulation hailed this successful exploit; and all persons on board the wreck, abandoning

their fears, now trusted to a like fortune for their escape. At the next return of the breakers, most of them, quitting the hold they had hitherto kept, suffered themselves to be drifted by the waters, and thus attained the strand; but some, who were not strong enough to keep the ground which they had gained, were washed back again by the waves, and perished. The remainder, however, by the assistance of those who had reached the land, were easily secured as they touched the beach, and at last the whole of the survivors stood safely upon the shore, wet and weary, indeed, but still thankful that they had escaped a worse fate. Their condition, nevertheless, would still have been far from consolatory, if the great Ruler of the universe had not repented him of the evil, and slackened the execution of his wrath. The wind gradually subsiding, died away with a gentle moaning, as if it bewailed the desolation its fury had wrought; the waves grew less mountain-like in appearance, and the surf upon the shore

less raging and turbulent. After some time the blackened masses of clouds slowly dispersed, and the sun, bursting from his imprisonment, shed a flood of glory over the still-agitated deep. The sea-gulls and other water-fowl, which, during the hurricane, had concealed themselves in the crags and sand-holes, now came forth, and traversed the waters in quest of such prey as the storm had provided them.

The first care of Earl Derby was to ascertain upon what part of the coast they were wrecked, for although very little time had elapsed from the commencement of the storm until the vessel had struck upon the shore, and they had observed accurately that the bank upon which the Spaniard was lost was the fatal Burbo-flat; yet the wind had blown so fiercely, and the atmosphere, during the hurricane, had been so dense, that they might have run many leagues out of their course, without perceiving in what direction they were driven. But when the sun had drawn up the chilling

mists which hung around the head-lands, the mariners called out at once, —

"We are on the North-Meols bank."

This bank, a long shelving and sandy flat, is upon the Lancashire shore, nearly twenty miles north of Liverpool, and is about half that distance from the Burbo-bank. The beach is plain, open, and level, and at this time is much used for sea-bathing; though in the reign of Elizabeth there was scarcely a house to be seen, unless we should dignify with that appellation a few straggling cabins that had been thrown up by the fishermen who frequented the coast in the fishing season, and which were formed only of loose logs of wood, patched over with turf, and thatched with the bent that grew around. The coast, as it retires inland, consists of a chain of barren sand-hills, which are now, and were probably then used as a rabbit-warren. It is distant only about three miles from the town of Ormskirk, and not more than five from Lathom, the then princely hall of the Earl of Derby, whither messengers

were instantly despatched with news of their misfortune. For the present, however, the Earl was constrained to content himself with such shelter as one of the cabins could afford; and leaving the strand, he proceeded slowly, supported by his son and gentleman of horse, and followed by his attendants, towards a hovel, whence they perceived a smoke to ascend. It was situated at the inland side of a long but low tongue of land which runs from the southward, and is somewhat elevated above the beach, and had been there erected for the purpose of obtaining a partial shelter without removing far from the water. On reaching the door, which one of the mariners opened without ceremony, they beheld a man stretched at full length upon the floor, buried in sleep. A tolerable fire, of wood and turf, burned in the chimney, but there were no articles of household utility; no sign of aught in the shape of provision, nor any convenience for comfort or repose. A block of wood, the root of an old tree, was the sole seat

in the cabin, and this was immediately possessed by the Earl, who gave orders that his host should not be disturbed. That a man, however, should sleep amid the congratulations and murmurs of a number of persons that had escaped death by the greatest providence, was soon found to be impossible. The sleeper awoke, and gazed with astonishment, not unmixed with fear, upon the boisterous crew that had taken possession of his dwelling. He was a middle-aged man, of a marked but comely countenance, with an eye whose sparkle evinced a furious and passionate mind; and was not at all, in dress or appearance, like the fishermen who were known occasionally to occupy the cabin; but seemed rather one of those preachers who adopted the Calvinist doctrine and discipline, and who about this time began to increase in England in great proportion. With that stiffness for which the puritans afterwards became remarkable, he awaited the salutation of the intruders, and regarded them with a look of hesi-

tation, blended with chagrin and vexation. This reception of strangers, who, he might perceive, had been the sport of the hurricane, as they were all drenched and dripping with water, by no means pleased the Earl, but as he was unwilling to encroach upon the rights of another further than necessity obliged him, he said in a calm and conciliating tone, "You seem, honest friend, to regard us as usurpers of your cabin; we have suffered shipwreck, and only await here the return of our friends, who are gone for assistance."

"And ye are, questionless, fools enough," replied the stranger with an air of sarcastic contempt, "to be thankful that ye are not as those that have perished, and are now at rest. Your song is awakened for deliverance."

"Yea, truly," replied the worthy Peer. "Hath not the Lord redeemed us from death? Is not life, though twice given, a goodly gift?"

"Ay, eternal life—a regenerate heart," returned the man, "a quickened spirit;

but ye do mean the salvation of dust, of vile filthy earth, of this natural body."

"Wouldst thou have us, with hearts of stone, deny our acknowledgment of protection to our heavenly Father?" said the Earl; "wouldst thou have had us courted death, and gone to our judgment damned with suicide?"

"Ay," answered the fellow aloud; "who are ye, that should escape damnation, when men better than ye are marked out for eternal tortures?"

"Peace, villain; thou art a blasphemer," cried the Earl in great indignation. "'Tis well we had not thee on board, or thy sins would have sunk us in the wide sea."

"My sins!" exclaimed the wretch, wildly; and then, with an agonizing grin, he continued, "Ay, sooth, my sins would sink an armada, were it as great as that of Persian Xerxes."

"Who art thou," said Earl Derby, "that dost accuse thyself of this load of sin? whence dost thou come? why dost thou abide on this desert?"

The man looked fiercely upon the Earl as he thus questioned him, but made no answer, and to his reiterated interrogatories, refused all explanation or reply.

CHAP. VIII.

But is it not, indeed, a bless'd condition,
To be right noble, great and powerful,
A man of mark'd and gracious reputation,
And yet to be belov'd — belov'd, not fear'd;
To hear the general voice proclaim you father,
Ay, father of your country, and no tyrant.

THE QUEEN'S COURTIER.

In less than two hours the messengers returned to the cabin, attended by the Earl's steward, and several other persons of his household, with changes of clothes, and horses for the accommodation of their lord, his son, and his attendants. The steward, Master William Massey, was a man so notorious for his good nature, that it was said of him, as of the famous Gilpin, "Turn out a horse any where in Lancashire, and he'll find his way to the steward's gate;" and such entire confidence did the tenantry and servants of the Earl place in this worthy officer, that any man among them

would as soon have wavered in his faith, as in his opinion of Master Massey's justice. With this officer came the treasurer, Sir William Sherborne, a man of equal probity as the seneschal, but of superior parts and a severer nature. He was respected by all, and most of all by his lord, who relied upon his conduct and integrity, as much as upon his own honour. Both these officers, as well as the other domestics, were received by the Earl with great joyfulness.

"Ha, Massey! good Sherborne!" cried the Peer, shaking both warmly by the hand; "I thought I had taken my last farewell of ye; but for Ned Stanley, I had never seen house or hall again; one vessel hath perished in our sight, whilst we have reason to be thankful that our lives are spared."

"Heaven be praised!" cried the steward; "one has need of trials to learn for what blessings we should feel grateful. Good Master Edward, you are welcome home, and the more welcome, as the brave deliverer of our lord."

"And what sayest thou, Sherborne,

to Ned Stanley?" said the Earl, "he is somewhat of a wild-blood truant, but the knave sacrificed himself to-day for my safety."

"Heretofore I have been no favourite of Sir William's," said Edward Stanley; "but I crave his pardon for all past unkindness."

"Talk not of pardon, young man," answered the treasurer, with affectionate warmth, "it is my duty and inclination to spend my life in the service of every member of your noble family; if I have ever seemed severe to your boyhood, deem it not, I beseech ye, the fault of my disaffection to your person, but rather the desire I had to see your errors corrected by discipline, and your habits formed to virtue: and from the events of this day, let me say hereafter, that the partial kindness of our lord to his youngest son, hath been justified by that son's affection."

The kindly tones of this amiable man touched by chance upon one of the few chords of human feeling that vibrated responsively in the heart of the youth; and

for the first time since the days of his childhood, his eye was moistened by a tear, which he nevertheless dashed away with scorn of his own effeminacy. An opportunity seemed to be afforded him of abandoning the vicious course he had hitherto pursued, and of retracing his steps to the pathway of virtue, but the evil fiend, unwilling to give up so bold a proselyte, laughed sarcastically in his ear, and forced him, in opposition to his better nature, to pass it by with contempt. As every abortive attempt to subdue an enemy, makes him the stronger and more difficult to be overcome; so the failure of this chance to soften the depraved disposition of Edward Stanley, hardened him in his wicked propensities, and fixed him more unalterably to their gratification. From this moment there was no breach of morality or virtue which he hesitated to commit upon any ground but that of expediency, and as his character matured in decision and inflexibility, vice, like the clinging ivy, increased her ramifications, and at length bound him in her indissoluble embrace.

The emotion of Edward Stanley did not, however, pass without observation. His father, with a sentiment of joy, marked what he deemed a symptom of repentance for his late disloyalty, and a harbinger of better conduct in the time to come.

Whilst he was yet busy in this happy contemplation, and engaged in changing his raiment, in which he was assisted by Sir William Sherborne and the steward, he was informed by the latter, that since his departure from Lathom, the Hall had been visited by company, who were chagrined at his absence.

"Now, who may thy company be, Massey?" replied the Earl. "It is not my son Harry; I had little hope when I left ye yestermorn, that I should meet Ned at Liverpool; and perhaps the same wind hath blown the Lord Strange to Lathom."

He looked shrewdly at Edward Stanley, but could not perceive by any indication of his countenance, that his elder brother knew aught of his return to England.

"Nay, marry," replied the steward with a benignant smile, "it is a Stanley sure enough, but not the Lord Strange; his honour, Sir Thomas, hath come over from Haddon, and hath brought with him the pride of the mountains, Lady Margaret Vernon."

"Margaret Vernon," cried the possessor of the cabin, "why comes she here? is it for me? Get ye hence, I know her not. Her father is a tyrant, rank and bloody; he holds the cross in one hand, and the sword of persecution in the other. Get ye hence, I know her not."

These exclamations were received with signs of astonishment both by Earl Derby and his attendants, who gazed upon the excited lineaments of the stranger for a considerable time, in expectation that he would explain himself. But perceiving by the declension of his features from sanguine enthusiasm to dogged sullenness, that he meditated no further speech; the Earl said, "What knowest thou of Sir George Vernon, that he bears no better name in thy mouth

than tyrant and persecutor? and how comes it that thou, whom we find here on the banks of the Irish sea, should be so intimate with the Knight of Haddon, as to brand his fame, thus publickly, with blood and violence?"

"The brand is of his own burning," returned the fanatic; "who knows not the Vernon from the wide Mersey to the silver Wye that runs before his proud castle gate? The day is scarce gone by, when this Herod would have strangled the very babes of the land, so he might have bolstered up his accursed superstition."

"Vile dog!" cried the indignant Peer; "did I not hold thee as mad as the wind that but late blew, I would have thee scourged for a foul slanderer and defamer."

"If thou hast not yet quite repented thee of this thought," replied the enthusiast with daring calmness, "try, I beseech thee, whether the patience of a Christian, or the malice of a brute may be soonest exhausted. I will not shrink from thy vengeance, Earl Derby, if thou

be that Lord indeed, nor will I ejaculate an useless prayer for mercy to a man of thy charity."

"The man is a besotted fanatic," said the treasurer; "it were a waste of spirit to be angry with him. Besides, he is perhaps in strait of poverty, and Heaven knows how keen an edge penury doth give to the tongue! Good fellow! what brought thee hither? and whence comest thou?"

"I will answer thee, blind as thou art, and proud of heart," replied the man, "because I care not if the world point at me with the finger of scorn; derision I have well earned, and it is only when I see the rabble gaze upon me, and with heartless mockery scoff at my repentance, that I feel lightened of the load of damning sin that crushes me down and fetters me to hell. Once—forgotten for ever be the time — I was, like you are now, the slave of antichrist, the servant of Belial, the passionate lover of the scarlet whore. I was made drunk with her inchantments, and sang her praises before the altars of idolatry — woe unto my soul!"

"Ay, woe unto thy soul, wretch!" cried Edward Stanley, foaming with rage, and laying his hand upon the collar of the enthusiast. "Were I to dash thy body upon these rocks, it were meet reward of thy blasphemy."

"Be at peace, Edward Stanley," said his father; "the conscience of this fellow will avenge our holy faith upon him with keener edge than thy dagger's point."

The youth, at the command of his father, pushed the fanatic rudely away, and walked aside; on finding himself liberated from the grasp of the young warrior, the stranger would have resumed his narrative, but the Earl, (having now re-clothed himself, and the rest of the attendants being prepared for march) stopped his harangue, and said, "Thou shalt have an opportunity, be sure on't, before we part, of clearing up thy character, which by my faith doth now seem blurred and shadowed; but now I have neither time nor taste for thy story. Ormston, look to him, bring him along with ye; if he have aught worth the carrying, see it be conveyed to Lathom."

"I have that which is worth more than thy proud earldom, Lord Derby," said the man, going into the cabin, and returning with a small copy of the Scriptures, which he held aloft for their observation. "This book, which hath been my companion by night and by day for ten years, is more fragrant than myrrh or aloes, more worthy than silver or gold, precious stones, or fine linen of Egypt; it is sight to the blind, a crutch to the lame, hearing to the deaf, a gift of tongues to the dumb-sinner.

"A murrain on thy tongue!" cried Edward Stanley, "I would take three thrusts on a short cloak to have thee as dumb as a door-post. Get to horse, sirrah, without more gossip, or I shall lay the flat of my dagger about thine ears."

The orator, notwithstanding the fierce look of the young soldier, would not have retired from the contest without a reply to this threat, had he not been seized by the domestics, and mounted on horseback by their united exertions; and

when seated, the back of the animal which he bestrode, seemed so convenient an elevation for the delivery of his harangue, that it was with the utmost difficulty the gentleman of horse could oblige him by threats of the gag to forego the temptation.

At length, the Earl and those who were accommodated with horses, having gained their saddles, the cavalcade began to move as quickly as the rough nature of the ground would permit. The evening had commenced with an indication of another storm. The wind whistling along the desert shore, among the rocks, amid the sand-clefts, and through the long and slender bent which grew upon the hills, sighed and moaned in almost modulated cadence, and the sea, whose furious tide could be dimly seen through the shades of evening from the road, broke upon the beach with hollow and awful roar. Sometimes, as the horsemen rode upon elevated ground, they could observe the surf breaking upon some jutting rock, in a thousand par-

ticles of white foam, untill the rising water, swallowing up its sturdy antagonist, left no sign of its existence but in the ripple and swell that ran above. Afar off could be seen the beacons of Hoylelake and Bidston, diminished by the thick veil of clouds into two solitary and insignificant specks, and denoting by their shorn honours that danger lurked in the Heavens as well as in the waters. In a short time, however, the cavalcade made a turn round the point of a sandy hill, along the side of which the road had hitherto run parallel with the water, and leaving the shore, advanced into the country. The roar of the tide, the dashing of the surf, and the piercing cries of the seafowl died away on the ears of the horsemen as they gradually receded, and were at length lost in the general commotion of the elements. After half an hour's slow progress, the Earl and his attendants gained a tolerable road, and putting on with increased speed, they soon reached the town of Ormskirk, distant only two miles from Lathom House. Here, by the Earl's direction, his servants

provided themselves with torches; and by the assistance of these renewed their march with much greater velocity than before, and with a greater certainty of not being cast away in the darkness of the night. They had, however, proceeded only about half the distance between Ormskirk and Lathom, when, on a sudden, their march was arrested by the cries of the stranger, who threatened to throw himself from his horse unless they halted.

"What devil's whim sticks in thy mad brain now?" cried Edward Stanley; "the ground might be gaping to swallow thee, fool."

"Doth it not?" cried the fanatic, throwing up his bridle-rein, and with clasped hands exhibiting marks of the most supreme horror. "See ye not the gulf of hell yawning before us, and its blue fires curling over the edge of the abyss? Advance not as ye would be safe from death! ye are lost if ye go onward a single step. To-day have the waves been rebuked for your succour, but then ye had not me to draw down the light-

ning on your bark. That storm was raised to drive me from a frightful purpose; its end is accomplished, and now the fiend will have his victim. But I will struggle with thee, tempter; I will not go like a lamb to the sacrifice; I will combat thee to the death."

"Thou may'st combat thine own shadow when the sun shines," said Edward Stanley; "but now thou hast nought to do but put thy horse forward — advance, sirrah; thou would'st not have us await the issue of thy folly at this hour in dead darkness."

"Ah, if death and darkness were all!" exclaimed the stranger.

"Out upon thee for a hot-brained fanatic!" cried Lord Derby, "why keep ye us here?"

"Hot-brained!" rejoined the stranger, "ay, hot-bodied! The flames of infernal fire do already scorch me. I now have a foretaste of their exquisite torment; but I will not in despair play the suicide, and cast myself into yon reeking gulf. No — onward if ye will — your own

fates guide ye. Avaunt, fiend; avaunt, Apollyon."

"Drag the fool onward," cried Edward Stanley, "you, Ratcliffe and Forshaw, take his bridle-rein; and Ormston, lay thy rod about his horse's croupe — forward, sirrah."

The servants spoken to by Stanley instantly grasped the bridle of the lunatic stranger, whilst another domestic held him upright, and Ormston, with no mild hand, applied his riding rod to the back and flanks of his horse. The cavalcade again set forward, and after a curvet or two, caused by the man's retention of the bridle, the beast sprang away after his companions at a hard gallop, and soon passed over that ground which his rider fancied to be yawning beneath his feet. The march was not, however, continued without great opposition from the stranger, who shouted aloud, and attempted several times to throw himself to the ground; nor would they, it is probable, have succeeded in getting him so far as Lathom, had not Edward Stanley approached him when he was in the high

and mighty sweep of his resistance, and without offering at argument, saluted him with half a dozen severe stripes over the shoulders. This appeal recalled him immediately to docility and obedience. He muttered some reproach of heathen barbarity, and suffered his horse to proceed without prolonging an useless contest.

In a few minutes afterwards they drew nigh to the famed mansion of the Earl of Derby, a description of which we shall give in the words of his house's biographer.

" Lathom-house stands upon a flat, upon a moorish, springy and spumous ground, and was encompassed with a strong wall of two yards thick: upon the walls were nine towers flanking each other, and in every tower were six pieces of ordnance that played three one way and three the other Without the wall was a mote eight yards wide and two yards deep; upon the back of the mote between the wall and the graff was a strong row of palisadoes around: besides all these there was a high strong tower, called the eagle tower, in the midst of the house, surmounting all

the rest, and the gate-house was also two high and strong buildings, with a strong tower on each side of it. Besides all that is said hitherto of the walls, towers, and mote, &c. there is something so particular and romantic in the general situation of this house, as if nature herself had formed it for a strong hold or place of security; for before the house to the south and south-west is a rising ground so near as to overlook the top of it, from which it falls so quick, that nothing planted against it on those sides can touch it further than the front wall: and on the north and east sides, there is another rising ground even to the edge of the mote, and then it falls away so quick that you can scarce, at the distance of a carbine shot, see the house over that height. The uncommon situation of it may be compared to the palm of a man's hand, flat in the middle, and covered with a rising round about it."

As this, however, is a description of the fortress at a more warlike period than that which we have selected for our story, namely, in the civil wars, when the Lady

Charlotte Countess of Derby, stood a most severe and prolonged siege by the parliament forces under the Colonels Egerton, Rigby, Ashton, and Holcroft, and with matchless spirit beat off the assailants, and forced them to raise their blockade, the ordnance and munition of war, it is probable, were of greater strength then than before the troubles. But the fortress itself was the same; in fact, as it had stood with occasional alterations for centuries previously, and was surrounded by a large and woody park, whose giant trees appeared coeval with this ancient family, and were frequently the haunt of the eagle and vulture.

As the horsemen advanced beneath the canopy of foliage formed by the wood; the hoarse wind whistled shrilly through the branches, and appeared to join with the intruders in disturbing the solemn and awful repose of the scene. The contrast was, indeed, remarkable. Before them, as they advanced towards the house, the stillness of night was alone interrupted by the saw of the wind, or the cry of deer or

birds, but soon the silence was broken by the loud laughter and shouts of the horsemen, by the deep tramp of their steeds, and the gingling of their harness. The darkness which pervaded the wood was dissipated, as they rode onward, by the bright gleam of their torches, whilst the ground they had passed over, and the surrounding horizon, contracted now within the sphere of their light, seemed tinted with a leaden glare, similar to that seen over the chimney of a furnace. The deer startled from their repose, dashed across their path, and either in the hurry of retreat, or dazzled by the splendour of the torches, frequently ran into the midst of the cavalcade. But they were suffered to extricate themselves without molestation, and diving into the recesses of the woods, they were soon beyond sight or annoyance. At length, the Earl and his attendants gained the top of the rising ground mentioned by the author we have quoted in his description of Lathom, and that mansion, lighted up with princely splendour, now threw open its gates to receive its lord.

The whole of the family, with the Countess at their head, came forth into the outer court to receive them, and the Earl forgot the dangers and fatigues he had suffered in the caresses and congratulations and blessings of his wife and servants. It was some time before aught could be attended to but the recapitulation of the day's perils, and the wonderful escape which Lord Derby and his companions had experienced; and tears were not wanting to deplore the death of those that had fallen victims to the devouring element. Edward Stanley, although he had never before been a favourite with the domestics, over whom his haughty spirit had loved to tyrannize, all at once became their idol. In the height of their gratitude, they forgot his pride, his ungraciousness, and his contempt of their feelings; they moulded him anew in their hearts, and now looked upon him with as much affection and confidence, as they had before held him in distrust and dislike; and to them he did, indeed, seem changed, for instead of repulsing their expressions of kindness,

and resuming his ancient haughtiness of demeanour, no person could now appear more mild, gracious, and affable than he was; he seemed born to be the man of popular favour, the gentle and condescending lover of the people: he was ready to answer all questions, and to listen to all observations, whether of praise or censure, though the domestics were too diffident how long the lion would sheathe his claws, to make many remarks of the latter character upon him. But, in fact, Edward Stanley, in the short time he had quitted his father's house, had become as much altered as he appeared; not that the pride and austerity of his heart were softened, but that he had learned to cloak his vices with a specious garb, and to avoid giving offence to those persons that could serve his interest, where there was no occasion for his harsh and insolent treatment of them. He now fully estimated the value he should place upon men's opinions, and in the hope that he should buy their suffrages by attention and gentle carriage,

he laid himself out with a proper assortment of smiles, nods, and frank "ay, i'faith, good fellows," for this creditable task.

CHAP. IX.

Slend. No; she shall not dismay me: I care not for that, — but that I am afeard.

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

THE Earl had been in the house a very short time, when a loud knocking at the outer gate announced a new arrival; and in a few minutes more, a lady, equipped in a riding mantle, and attended by two gentlemen, entered the hall. One of the latter, a handsome cavalier, apparently of the age of five and twenty years, proved, on laying aside his cloak, to be Sir Thomas Stanley, the Earl's second son; and the female, as our readers will be assured, was the Lady Margaret Vernon. The third personage, as introduced by Sir Thomas, was Sir Simon Degge, a middle-aged Derbyshire Knight. Sir Thomas Stanley saluted his father with great astonishment, but shook hands with Edward composedly, as if he had known of his arrival.

"My Lord Derby!" he exclaimed, "Is it, indeed, my father, or has some wizard cast his glamour over me? But this morning we learnt at the Tower, you had sailed for the Isles, and at night I find ye a day's march out of your course."

"We have suffered shipwreck," replied Edward Stanley, carelessly, planting his eyes at the same moment full upon the lady, who had seated herself beside the Countess.

"What! didst thou also come by sea," said Sir Thomas.

"I could not come by land, brother;" answered the youth with a smile, "but the tale is over long for the telling; thou wilt hear all anon."

"Come hither, Tom," said the Earl, "and I will answer thee. Edward Stanley, entertain this gentleman."

"Rather the lady, Sir," replied he; "the gentleman will perhaps assist me in the task."

"Faith, Sir," cried the Derbyshire Knight, rising from his seat, and adjusting the folds of his ruff, "I would spare

no pains that my weak talent could afford to give pleasure and entertainment to this lady, or any other; but not to speak in mine own disparagement, I am some how troubled with a kind of disorder, whenever I address myself to a female, that choaks every word I would utter. Now if you can counsel me how to get over this impediment, I am at your service without more ado."

"Your's is a strange malady" — replied Edward, eyeing the Knight rather cynically, "You have never been i'the camp, nor at court, Sir Simon."

"Faith, no," replied the Knight, colouring, "I never had a military turn, and as for the court, I can't say; that is, I am most at home in the country — my health —"

"Right, Sir," said Edward, "every man should prefer his health; it is a sacred deposit; by the bye, Sir Simon, it is the country which sends forth such beauty as the Lady Margaret's to dazzle one's eye-sight, and choak one's utterance. The court hath none such; all

the blazing stars that ever shone around the throne would not stand one glance of those rolling orbs."

"I'faith, no;" answered the Knight, smiling and gently rubbing his hands, "no more they would. Under the rose, Master Edward Stanley," he continued in a whisper, "I have, notwithstanding mine embarrassment, a marvellous affection for your fine women. I never behold a rosy cheek or a languishing eye, without my chops watering for an hour afterward. 'Tis strange."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the youth, with an arch elevation of his eyebrows. "Then you have questionless been a gay gallant in your time. I warrant me thou hast left many a wench disconsolate."

"No; oh no; no such thing," replied the Knight with great gravity. "Though I have sighed at a distance, I have too much respect for my character as justice o' peace to do aught unseemly. Scandal, Master Stanley, is a blighting frost; it nips many a fair character, both of man and woman. No, I have endeavoured to live without giv-

ing the world a handle to talk. I am a chaste man, sir; let those that can say otherwise —"

"Ah, sir!" returned Edward Stanley, closing his eyes with mock humility, "you are indeed a paragon of virtue, unfit to live in these degenerate days; unless it be to prove that your chastity is full proof, and rises the clearer from temptation."

"Is't so, i'faith?" cried the Knight; "why, sure thou, who art so young, hast never fallen into sin?"

"Ah, woe the while!" replied the young Soldier, with a repentant grimace, and at the same time pulling out a tablet. "Let me see; what says this record of my crimes? Ha! at Brussels — Signora Lucrezia Langeroni, my sixteenth love, took the veil in the convent of Black Nuns, on my departure for England."

"What!" cried Sir Simon, in wonderful consternation; "your sixteenth? faith, I deemed the late King Harry had done himself little credit by marry-

ing six wives; but sixteen concubines! thou wilt be damned infallibly."

"And what is worse," continued Stanley, "though I have this evidence of sin for ever before me, yet I could as soon refrain from the air I breathe, as behold full blown beauty, like that of the lovely Vernon, with a cool and dispassionate soul. No; the loves revel amid those clustered ringlets, and swarm about that neck, inviting me to the feast.—Can I refuse the challenge? Never; or the blood of the chivalry runs not in my veins."

"And doth it always fall out," said the Knight, in the simplicity of his heart, "that noble blood is beset with these raging desires?"

"Tut, man," said Edward Stanley, taking him by the arm, "seest thou Earl Derby, that noble lord, than whom no man beareth greater honour or reverence? Thou would'st not believe it; and yet, by my soul, he hath three children of a lewd stock; thou dost start; but it is even so."

"Then, marry, it doth seem incon-

tinence is common," said Sir Simon; "and plain chastity, like the long hosen, is clean kicked out of fashion."

"Thou should'st know my brother, the Lord Strange," said Edward, "the most perfect courtier and gallant of the age; a travelled man, gifted with the humanities of learning and polish; and he, forsooth, is as arrant a sinner as ever made cuckold of a citizen. Nay, honest Tom Stanley, that looks so modest upon the matter, hath some half-dozen mistresses at the Isle, where he holds the lieutenancy."

"Say you so!" exclaimed the Knight; "then have I lived hitherto in barbarous restraint, whilst my liver was frying to be among the wenches: but henceforth I will relax; yea, I will keep as many lemans as hounds, and have them in leashes to halloo unto when I need diversion."

"A brave resolution, by St. Jerome," cried the youth; "and to begin, do thou enter the lists with me for the favour of this sister of the loves: I will play thee fair as an honourable companion; and if

thou canst win her, be it so to thy joy, good fellow."

"Marry, I will do't," returned the Knight, drawing his breath hardly, as though he was about to undertake an enterprize of great difficulty; "but how must I begin? I have to learn all: thou must counsel me."

"Pish, 'tis nothing," rejoined Edward Stanley, carelessly; "put on a love-sick visage, hide thine hand in thy doublet, thus, and groan forth a deep sigh every half minute, as if thou wert broken-winded; spare not thy lungs, the deeper the tone the keener is thy smart; she will understand thee, or needs my counsel worse than thou dost."

"O - - - h," cried Sir Simon, with such emphasis as caused the eyes of all the company to turn upon him.

"What's the matter? Are you not well, Sir Simon?" cried Sir Thomas Stanley.

"Oh! yea, it is nothing," replied the Knight eagerly; and turning to Edward he continued, "what so?—will that do?"

"Most wonderfully," replied the youth; "such a bottomless pit sigh as

that must captivate the heart of a stone. To her, my prince of groans; she will drop into thine arms before thou hast discharged a score."

"Allow me to say, nevertheless," cried the Knight, "I pity your loss of her, and also your brother's; he is a worthy friend, but as the proverb says, there is no friendship in love."

"Right, sir Justice," said Edward Stanley, "thou hast a pretty notion of equity; thy calling is not lost upon thee. But let not pity for me, or Tom Stanley, hinder thine enjoyment; this will be thy maiden achievement, whilst, thou knowest, we are old in the trade, and have not hearts so brittle as to break at a woman's neglect; so give the rein to thy fortune; advance to the charge in the name of Saint Venus."

"I will: yea, I am nigh ready," said the Knight, advancing one stride, and fetching his breath hardly; "but thou knowest mine ancient malady is not to be overcome at once, and beside, though I have often been in the Lady Margaret's company, and have travelled with her

from Haddon hither, yet, would'st thou believe it, I have never said more to her than 'Yea, fair damsel,' and, 'Nay, sweet one,' and such like. Marry, I doubt much mine ability to attack her; do thou go foremost; thou art a soldier, and should'st know how to lead."

"Have a good heart, comrade," replied Stanley: "thou wilt not, sure, fall before a shot is fired; thou may'st open thy battery at a distance, if it please thee."

"Nay, marry, then I should have to march over the ground between us," answered the Knight, "and stand the fire of her eyes. I'faith, I will begin at close quarters, and then she can take no aim. I would my lady, your mother, were farther distant."

"Tut, man, she'll spoil no sport," said Edward; "thou hast but to make a signal, and she'll stand off."

"Will she?—then I will exert my courage," cried the Knight, and he actually advanced some paces towards the ladies, when he was interrupted by the loud ringing of the supper bell, which sum-

moned the inhabitants of the castle, both gentle and simple, to their concluding meal for the day. The Earl and Countess rose up, and led the way to the dining-hall, followed by Lady Margaret, Sir Thomas Stanley, and the rest. The Derbyshire Knight appeared struck dumb with vexation, and vented his chagrin to his colleague, who listened to him with an air of mortification.

"By my faith now," cried Sir Simon, "this is plaguy unfortunate; when I had wrought my courage to the necessary temper, the bell rings, and the bird flies. Curse all bells! — I shall never hear one ring again without wishing the caster in purgatory. What should I do?"

"Make the best of your time," replied his companion; "salute her as she passes, it will be a declaration."

The Lady Margaret, in order to go into the dining-hall, was obliged to pass the spot where the conspirators stood, and was escorted by Sir Thomas Stanley; and as she proceeded, listening to the soft whispers of her lover, for so in

reality Sir Thomas was, she was startled from her dreams of pleasure by the deep and hollow groan of the Derbyshire Knight. Both the lovers stopped short, and enquired into the cause of this heart-rending intonation.

"You must sure be unwell, Sir Simon," said Sir Thomas; "this is the second time you have alarmed us with your moaning."

"The good Knight hath, perchance, received some hurt," said the Lady.

"I have received — I mean I have not received — that is, I have received some hurt from the death-darting fires that are lit up by the god cupid in that heaven-created face," cried the Knight; "and nought but thy smiles can restore me to health, and skin over my wounds."

"Is that all?" replied the gay damsel; "I feared thou hadst been in greater danger. But if smiles will cure you, Sir Simon, be of good heart, for I promise ye to do naught but laugh the rest of the evening."

And to convince him that her promise was not fallacious, she gave a loose to

her mirth, and laughed most heartily; whilst Sir Thomas Stanley, though careful to avoid turning his father's guest into ridicule, had a hard struggle to retain his gravity. Edward Stanley, who stood close behind his *protegée*, acted a deeper part. With a countenance not only undistorted by levity, did he stand gazing upon Margaret Vernon, but he contrived to throw into his features an expression of intense feeling, as if the passion with which he was seized for the beautiful satirist had deprived him of regard for all other objects. But he was soon aroused from his affected reverie by the Derbyshire Knight, who, finding his own wit incompetent to the task of contending with his fair adversary, fairly turned his back upon her, and in dumb show made an appeal to the youth for his protection. This, with an air of princely graciousness, the wily Edward afforded him, and approaching the "laughter-loving dame," he said, in a voice replete with softness, "By my faith, fair Margaret, your wit hath too keen an edge. If you nip the Knight's

hopes in the bud, we shall lose the sight of some century of sonnets he is already about addressing to you."

"Sonnets!" cried the Knight, in astonishment.

"What, is the Knight turned poet?" said Sir Thomas.

"Yea," answered Edward. "The name of Margaret Vernon shall eclipse that of Geraldine; and Sir Simon Degge will rival the pensive and gallant Surrey in the use of pen as well as lance. Look to it, fair Margaret; the blood of many a noble knight will cry out for vengeance upon your beauties."

"Nay, Sir Simon," said the gay damsel, "if thou art bent upon turning knight-errant, I must, indeed, become thy divinity."

"Knight-errant!" exclaimed Sir Simon, unable to get out more than a word in a breath.

"And if thou should'st send those chevaliers thou dost vanquish to my foot-stool," continued the lady, "see thou sendest no monsters. I have a mortal dread of all animals inhuman in

their aspect. The knights I will treat graciously for thy sake."

She then, with a smiling air, gave her hand to Sir Thomas, who led her into the dining-hall.

At the table Edward Stanley found himself seated opposite Margaret Vernon, and adjacent to Sir Simon Degge, the latter of whom, still smarting under the ridicule his absurdities had excited, seemed desirous of soothing his wounded spirit, by disburthening his vexation upon his neighbour.

"Saw ye ever a man of my quality," said he to Edward Stanley in a whisper, "so laughed at — so abused — treated so much like a coxcomb or a fool? I deserve it, i'faith, for spending breath on such a laughing, giggling, pert mynx. She handsome! she hath eyes like two hazel-nuts, and they dart fire like those of a cat-a-mountain; then she is as tall as I am, and as fat and rosy as a country milking-maid, whilst your lady of quality should never exceed five feet three inches in height, and her body should

be as bare of flesh as the carcase of a horse picked by the crows."

"But how fair and round is her neck!" whispered Edward in reply; "how dazzling her complexion! how exquisite the turn of her bosom and waist! and her smile——"

"Is the smile of a she-devil," said the Knight; "for it sinks ye into the earth, and turns ye into stone."

"Tush, man," returned the youth; "thou art new to the arts of women. Thou should'st not desire a better welcome than she gave to thy suit. Would thy chance had been mine — I say no more."

"Say'st thou truly?" rejoined the Knight; "but 'tis true I am poorly skilled in amatory arts, and her reception might be the reverse of that I fancied it. But as I live, she seemed to turn me into sport and ridicule; to make a butt of me for her diversion; to stick me up for a target to shoot the arrows of her wit at. Marry, this was not well, as it seems to me."

"Nothing could be better," said his instructor; "no confession, were it the last that she could make, should give thee better assurance of her favour, than the wild japes and gibes she has now heaped upon thee. Courage, Sir Simon; a private explanation will give thee ease. She is thine if thou dost push thy conquest; and thy nature is too sanguine, or I deceive myself, to strike sail in sight of port."

"Think'st thou my appearance is gay enough to captivate her?" whispered the Knight, surveying himself steadily. "This is but a horsing doublet; I have richer clothes in my mails, which thou shalt fancy for me on the morrow. By the fashion of thine apparel I should deem thee to have a marvellous good taste; and in these days of folly, the tailor, thou knowest, makes half the man."

"Thy figure, in thy horsing doublet, is gay enough to bind the fickle Elizabeth on her throne," replied Edward Stanley, "and to spread discord among the belles of the court. Tut, Sir Simon! thou art over modest. A man of thy bearing doth

at first sight prepossess all women with fair opinion."

"I'faith, thou dost flatter," said the Knight, with an air of complacency; "I know thou dost. It is true I am but five-and-forty, and temperance hath kept me from growing pursy and gross; but I could never creep into the system of that childish gaiety which appears ever to win the heart of woman: beside, I am no tilter, nor man for your sword and buckler. I ride but timidly; and whatever thou mightest say in my favour regarding the sonnets, I have neither taste for the poetry nor music of this day."

"No!" cried Stanley, turning round with an air of astonishment; "all these thine errors must be reformed, and speedily, if thou would'st hope to thrive in thy suit. No sonneteer, — no lover of the gay rebeck, the sweet-toned mandolin, the soft guitar!"

"I had once some skill in the hurdy-gurdy," said the Knight, "but my passion for it lasted not."

"Tush! thou didst blow the buck's horn," cried Edward; "thy hurdy-gurdy

is detestable ; the very name of it isbase enough to sicken a fair lady. But thou can'st dance ?"

" Oh, yea, 'Jolly Robin,' " replied the Knight ; " I have danced it for thirty years."

" Jolly Robin !" said his counsellor ; " I trow thou danced it to thy hurdy-gurdy."

" Yea, truly ; I did so," answered the Knight.

" They were meet companions," returned Stanley ; " but on the morrow I will put thee in the manége. Ormston shall mount thee on the Earl's famous Barb, and thou shalt have a few runs at the ring in private."

" Runs at the ring !" said the Knight, turning pale with apprehension.

" And then thou shalt be furnished with a suit of harness," continued the young Soldier ; " and I will ride a tilt with thee for fair Margaret's sake."

" Marry, not I," returned Sir Simon ; " I never had a cuirass on my back but once, and then I languished a-bed for three months after."

"Nay, an thou art not docile, I give thee up at once," said Edward. "Thou must also take a turn at sword and buckler with Jock Forshaw, who will beat as brave a clatter upon thy target and headpiece as ever thou would'st wish to hear."

"Ay, i'faith; and much greater than I desire to feel," cried the Knight; "I shall be thumped into a jelly with your tilting and swash-bucklering: the very thoughts of such exercises make my bones ache. But this is all?"

"Nay; thou must brush up thy fancy," said Stanley, "and try thy hand at a sonnet, a canzonet, or poetic epistle."

"Thou art laughing at me, by the old rood of Beauchief," cried the Knight, somewhat angrily.

"Nay, if thou art not content with my counsel," replied Edward, "thou may'st play thine own racket."

"Nay; but for me to pen a sonnet," cried Sir Simon, "that never could make words jingle for my head!"

"Why then it is time thou didst begin," said Stanley; "these things must

thou do, Sir Simon, or give up thy quest."

"I'faith, Master Stanley," returned the Knight, "I find this love to be no losenger; they talk of his roses, but the thorns are uppermost."

"A fine woman, Sir Simon," whispered his companion, "an angel like that before us, is worth trouble and pains to win. If thou would'st succeed, thou must dash aside peril with one hand, and grasp thy prize with the other. — A milksop is unworthy the enjoyment of beauty."

"Well, well," said the Knight; "I will do mine essay, though it be rather late to begin one's education at five-and-forty years. But while I am under thine instruction, Master Edward Stanley, thou wilt not betray me?"

"Betray ye, Sir Knight!" returned his companion; "why should I instruct ye in the means likely to rob me of such charms, when I might hint to your mistress that you were dead to every gentle accomplishment? By my faith, you seem to think you are fixing obligation on me, by learning these exercises, which are like

to cost me the greater proportion of trouble. I find it is little wisdom to conceive friendships, without knowing more of one's ally than I do of you."

"Nay, marry," rejoined Sir Simon; "doubt not but I am grateful for all favours, — beshrew me else; be pacified, Master Stanley, and hereafter thou shalt turn and wind me as if thou hadst a bit between my teeth."

This conversation, our readers must understand, had been carried on by the Knight of Derbyshire and his intriguing protector, whilst they were engaged at their meal, with which, as it was similar to many hundred suppers that have been elsewhere described, we have not thought proper to burthen our pages. However, the numerous breaks occasioned in their repast by their continued dialogue served to spin out the time they occupied in eating amazingly; and even Edward Stanley was so wholly engrossed in deceiving his companion, and in gazing upon his lovely opposite, that he did not perceive that the whole of the company at table, himself and Sir Simon excepted, had

finished eating. And he was only aroused from his interesting contemplations, by being jocularly asked by his brother, if his plate was similar to the bread possessed by one of the heroes of an ancient romance, which never lessened by being eaten, but grew as fast as it was cut down?

"Our worthy guest, Sir Simon, and our son," said the Countess, "have been so much engaged in talk, that I fear they have supped but poorly."

"No wonder that Sir Simon should be at fault in his diet," said Sir Thomas; "it is marvellous, wounded as he is, that he can eat at all."

"Wounded!" exclaimed Lady Derby, "how?—where? — I knew not of this."

"I beseech ye, most honourable dame," cried the Knight, "regard not the japes of these jesters. I am quite whole in my body, and can laugh with the best of them."

"Oh, very good," answered the Countess, laughing heartily. "I see very plain, — oh, yes; it is an affair of the heart: a little love-sick or so; — very

well, very well; but at your age, Sir Simon, people don't die of those qualms; they are then of tougher properties. Yes, yes, you may laugh with reason; your wounds are not desperate."

"No, most honourable dame, ha! ha! ha!" answered the Knight, affecting a laugh; for he was so much confounded at the Countess's reflection upon his age, that he could not bring it out in its round and natural volume. But Edward Stanley, who observed him with a scrutinizing eye, and saw the reason of his hysterical giggle, made up for his deficiency by a loud and sonorous roar that shook the table, and put his friend entirely out of countenance. The Earl, who perceived his embarrassment, with great good-nature rose from the table, and the company dispersed to seek repose.

CHAP. X.

A lover of late was I,
For Cupid would have it soe;
The boy that hath never an eye,
As every man doth knowe:
I sighed and sobbed, and cried alas!
For her that laugh'd, and call'd me an ass.
A Lover of Late.

Sir Phœbus, as some of our predecessors, the ancient romance writers, would say, had scarcely mounted his fiery courser, and armed in his celestial panoply begun his career, before Sir Simon Degge, with measured pace and solemn brow, was observed walking leisurely in the gardens of the Castle. He sometimes stopped, and bit his fingers, like a man pondering some important subject, and then, with a nod of approbation, proceeded in his walk. Wholly inattentive to the objects around him, he frequently found that he had ad-

vanced up to a wall, which prevented his further progress, or was in the act of striding into the fish-pond, when a ray of the sun glancing upon the water, informed him of his danger. At length, wearied with his deliberate march, the Knight seated himself upon a tressel, and leaning his head upon his hand, either fell asleep, or was absorbed in the profoundest contemplation. But this state of quietude did not endure long; for, as if awoke from a dream, or struck by a sudden impulse, Sir Simon opened his eyes, and stared wildly around; then, thrusting his hand into the breast of his doublet, he drew forth his tablets, and fell to writing with amazing diligence. His aspect, as when he was walking, now betrayed the busy author; every muscle seemed dilated with active intelligence; and as he secured upon his tablets the painful throes of his muse, his countenance bore ample testimony to her fecundity. Sometimes, indeed, it appeared as if he exclaimed with the satyrist, "*Nascitur ridiculus mus;*" for after the nod and smile of contented ap-

probation, usual before he made use of his stylum, the patient Sir Simon put his iron again into the fire. At last, however, his authorship seemed concluded. He rose from his seat, and with his tablets in hand resumed his march, but at a pace much exceeding that he had used before he commenced his task, whilst at intervals he paused and recited, with a loud voice, some portion of his composition.

Whilst he was yet scaring the birds with his ill-attuned notes, he perceived at a distance the form of Edward Stanley advancing towards him, and who, as fortune would have it, had held him in his eye for a full half-hour. His first business was to thrust his tablets into the pocket of his wide Gascony breeches, commonly called Galligaskins, next to place his hands behind him, to elevate his head forty-five degrees, and to beat a tattoo upon the ground with his foot; and as he was unconscious that he had been observed, he performed his part with wonderful ability.

"Ha! Sir Simon!" cried Edward

Stanley, as he approached; "is it you I see out so early?

"Give you good day, Master Edward Stanley," answered the Knight, with great unconcern, and with a slight bow to his preceptor; "give you good day. These are fine gardens; i'faith, very fine gardens; grand sweeps, long terraces, and high balustrades; they surpass Sir George's at Haddon, marvellously; but the banks of the Wye look over the finer country: is't not so?"

"Very like, sir," replied Edward, "though 'tis long since I saw Haddon, or the banks of the Wye. But is it thy wont to rise at peep of day, or hath the air of Lancashire quickened thy spirit?"

"Nay, marry, I rise early for health's sake," returned the Knight; "it doth keep the crow's feet out of my eyes."

"And gives thee leisure to study madrigals, and to write them, perchance," said Stanley, smiling. "By Saint Columba, thou art an apt scholar, and will not, I see, shame my patronage."

"Madrigals!" exclaimed Sir Simon. "Alack-a-day! But hast thou seen the

sweet-scented balm this morning; the dew-dropped violet, the fair snowdrop?"

"No," answered Stanley; "I would fain see a snowdrop in the dog-days!"

"Tush! Master Stanley," cried the Knight, impatiently; "I meant not a simple flower. I spoke of the rose of beauty; the pink of paradise; the carnation of Haddon Towers."

"Margaret Vernon is not yet risen," replied Stanley, gravely; "her dreams are pleasant."

"So were not mine, i'faith," cried Sir Simon; "for I fancied I was mounted on an ass, habited as my lord's fool, and suddenly the wretched beast exalted his hinder parts, and dethroned me in the mire: your superstitious man, now, would say there was something in this."

"But thou art not superstitious?" said his preceptor. "Thou believest not in omens?"

"Not I, i'faith," answered the Knight, "Save when a raven flaps his wing over my head, or at my window; or a favourite dog fawns on a man I like not; or the

corn-crake yells out his vile squeak for three days running, around my house; or my horse neighs as I pass a gibbet; or the yule-clog goes out on Christmas-eve; or some such thing,—which all men of conscience must allow, are matters savouring of deep portent."

"True, very true," returned Stanley, smiling sarcastically; "a wise man doth never scorn intimation of danger, though its herald be an earth-worm."

"And therefore should not dreams, idle as they are in general," pursued Sir Simon, "be utterly rejected; for with the ancients, both of Greece and Rome, beside the people of Egyptia, the somnia fatidicorum et vatum was highly esteemed. Not that I have any faith, Master Stanley, in the heathen theology; which is blind, carnal, and barbarous, abounding with —"

"Lies, and therefore let us hear no more of it," said his companion, interrupting him; "rather let me hear the produce of the muse thou hast been courting these two hours."

"What muse dost thou mean?" cried

Sir Simon, with an affected stare of surprize. "Wouldst thou have Calliope or Euterpe leave the font of Castalia, and visit the shores of the Irish channel?"

"No, by Saint Bride!" answered Edward; "if the wandering spirit of some old botcher of ballads, some harper of your ancient minstrelsy, had lent thee inspiration, I fancy it would serve thy turn."

"I'faith, then, Master Edward Stanley, you fancy badly," cried the poet in a pet; "botcher of ballads, quotha? I, that have sipped the essence of Pindar, that have devoured quæ extant of the concise Alcæus, of the tender Sappho, of the exquisite Stesichorus, the amorous Ibycus, the super-excellent Anacreon, the memorable Simonides;—that have, like a patient and enduring scholar, perused all works of liberal letters, both in Grecian and Roman literature?—Homer hath been my pillow, and Virgil my pocket companion,—and yet, need I the aid of an errant harper? think'st thou I do?"

"Ask me not until I have read thy work," returned the young Soldier. "I

have seen verses of your book-learned men, that to my mind are worse than any ballad of the north country."

"Ay, ay," rejoined the poet; "but they were men who either despised Calliope and her sisterhood, or who were shunned by the heaven-born Muses. But thou shalt judge for thyself, whether I am not in their graces: I have not cultivated their acquaintance without profit; I think I have not; — you shall judge."

He then took out his tablets with much care, and after looking around to see that he had not a greater audience than he imagined, with a pompous tone and theatrical air, he read the following sonnet: —

Oh! where shall I find my love?
Sweet Phyllis I fain would woo:
I have sought her within the grove,
In the bower of amaranth too: —
Alas! alas! my fair hath flown,
And left me here to sigh and groan.

Doth she seek the turtle-doves' nest,
To gaze on their innocent play?
May the sight kindle love in her breast,
And banish all rigour away.
Ah! should my dear be kinder grown,
I then no more would sigh and moan.

Haste, Phyllis, haste to thy swain!
Return, and bring with thee joy!
Ah! let him no longer complain!
Ah! prithee no longer be coy!
Until thy love for me be shown,
I still must pine, and sigh, and groan.

"Bravo! bravo!" cried Sir Thomas Stanley, rushing out of a wilderness beside which the poet stood, and followed by Margaret Vernon and Sir William Sherborne. "Your pastoral, Sir Simon, makes a fool of Theocritus, and turns Virgil into a spinner of syllables. —

I still must pine, and sigh, and groan.

How tender, yet how nervous and emphatic! how simple, yet how exquisitely wrought! The sound hits the sense, whilst the sentiment throws us back upon Arcadia, and we live again in the golden age."

"And then," said Margaret Vernon, "that pretty allusion to the turtles, how natural for a fond lover! Indeed, Sir Simon, that passage should immortalize ye."

"And his unalterable resolution to complain until his mistress shall become

kind," pursued Sir Thomas; "does it not forcibly pourtray the ardour of his passion? By my troth, Knight, I never held thee of so warm a temperament."

"O dear!" exclaimed Margaret, with affected wonder, "did you not? The Knight has been making love to me ever since we left Haddon; and his mind was so wholly occupied by my idea, that he spake not five words during our journey, —didst thou, Sir Simon?"

"I fancied he was rather silent," said Sir Thomas; "but, for my soul, I could not divine the occasion. — Give thee joy, my worthy rival! As Francis said to his antagonist,—we both court the same mistress; each ought to urge his suit with all the address of which he is master: the most fortunate will prevail, and the other must rest contented."

Far from believing that he was the subject of ironical commendation, the Knight received the praises of his sonnet as a tribute due to his merit, and actually believed that Margaret Vernon was touched with its sentiments. In perfect good

humour, therefore, with himself and his companions, he gave his hand to Sir Thomas Stanley, and replied, —

"I accept your courtesy, Sir Knight, as frankly as did my prototype, Charles of Spain, that of his rival; and I pledge myself in this race of honour, where the prize is beauty, that I will do nought unbecoming the friendship that is betwixt us; — I will take no undue advantage."

"Then you must no more alarm the heart of our mistress," cried Sir Thomas, "with your sonnets and pastorals. — Heaven and earth! you have an advantage over me in that point, which is tremendous to think upon."

"Nay, marry, Sir Thomas," returned Sir Simon, laughing heartily, "it is fair and honourable to make use of those abilities we are endowed withal: each ought to urge his suit with all the address of which he is master — mind ye that, Sir Knight, ha, ha, ha! — I can't help it, if Heaven has not thought fit to make you a poet — ha, ha, ha! — Can I, fair Margaret? — ha, ha, ha!"

"No, truly not," answered the dam-

sel, joining in the laugh. "I fear, Sir Simon, you are above his match, — ha, ha, ha!—He must wear the willow, and go sigh by a murmuring stream — ha, ha, ha!"

"So he must, so he must," cried the Knight, laughing until the tears rolled down his cheeks, and a stitch seized him in the side. "Marry, I pity him the loss of those divine charms; and there is another here, too, that would fain be tasting, — ha, Master Edward! But you may join Sir Thomas with the willow garland."

"Nay, if thou dost win this maid," said Edward Stanley, deliberately, and fixing his eyes upon Margaret Vernon, "I will even go hang myself, or return to the roaring tide that yesterday gaped for me."

"And I," said his brother, "will do vengeance on my own body at their bridal. I will not live to be an object of triumph to the victor."

"A fine subject for your elegiac muse, Sir Simon," said Margaret Vernon; "and how much will it exalt your character to deplore in set measure the sad end of your unfortunate rivals!"

"I'faith, it will," answered the Knight; "and I will begin to prepare myself with some slight consideration for the event, that I may do justice to their ashes."

"Your foresight, Sir Simon," said Sir William Sherborne, smiling, "does justice to your humanity. Your competitors, I fear, would scarcely do as much for you, were your cases reversed."

"I'faith, Sir William," replied the poet, with an air of importance, "you can only expect from a man that which he hath. We are not all intellectually gifted; and the camp is a bad school for the cultivation of letters. There are excuses — many excuses, for these gentlemen; it would be ungenerous to press them over sharply. Besides, how far do they surpass me in the vulgar exercises of riding, tilting, sword-play, dancing, and so forth! Marry, sir, we have both our points of excellence; and if mine be superior, to Heaven be the glory. — I am no boaster."

"Boaster!" said Edward Stanley, "thou art as modest a man as I ever met withal."

"And to speak after thine own fashion," pursued Sir Thomas, "Athenian Socrates was not more humble."

"Nor Plato more elegant," continued Edward.

"Nor Aristotle more profound," said his brother.

"Nor Demosthenes more vigorous in speech," cried the youth.

"Nor Xenophon more delightful in description, or more beautiful in remark," said Sir Thomas. "Thy wit is mingled of Ennius's audacity, of Virgil's majesty, of Horace's laughing sarcasm, of Ovid's tenderness. Plautus and Terence have bestowed on thee their knowledge of mankind, whilst Seneca hath lent thee his sterling morals."

"Nay, gentlemen, I pray ye, cease," cried Sir Simon, holding his hands before his face, for the purpose of concealing his blushes, (though we will not pretend to aver he had any to conceal,) "I pray ye, give a truce to your compliments. I know not if I have half the merit ye talk of; but whatever I have, i'faith, I will lay it with my poesy and my person, at the feet of my mistress."

As he concluded, he knelt down before Margaret Vernon; who, during the preceding discourse, had been so much tempted to laugh, that she was obliged to refrain from opening her mouth; and now that he bent his gaunt person before her, looking like the knight Don Quixote before the beautiful Duchess, her propensity became irresistible, and bore down all attempts at subjugation. She turned her head away, and leaning against a tree, gave loose to a peal of such hearty and convulsive laughter, that the garden rang with the merry notes. The two brothers and the Treasurer, who were equally moved as the lady, to give vent to their risible feelings, joined in chorus; and Margaret Vernon unable, after many efforts, to resume her gravity, at length took to her heels and ran off, leaving the poor Knight in the act of genuflexion, with the tablets in his hand, as if he had been engaged in prayer.

The damsel was speedily followed by Sir Thomas Stanley; but the Treasurer, who first resumed his self-possession, gave his hand to the luckless poet, who

had, during the merriment of his companions, remained motionless on his knees, turning his head from one to the other as the mirth of either was loudest. With the assistance of Sir William Sherborne, Sir Simon got upon his feet, and in silence replaced the tablets in his pocket; but he did not fail to cast an inquiring glance upon Edward Stanley, whose laughter had not even yet subsided. Finding, however, that he was not likely to receive an unasked explanation, he placed his hands behind him, and walking up to his facetious companion, in a tone replete with gravity, said, "What is the matter now, Master Edward Stanley?"

"The matter!" answered Stanley, still laughing; "i'faith, I know nought of it; — ask Sherborne."

Sir Simon, upon this reference, turned with great deliberation towards the Treasurer, and said, "Now, Sir William, you are a grave man, and should have some fair reason for laughing your lord's guest to scorn; I pray you, enlighten me, if it hurt not your conscience."

"Art thou mad?" cried Edward Stanley, advancing, and plucking the Knight by the sleeve. "Come with me, and I will teach thee the reason of our mirth."

"Nay, gentlemen, I will withdraw," said Sir William, glad to steal away from the Knight's reproaches.

"Ay, sir," said Sir Simon; "but see that you do not return to your old cover; have no more hiding and listening. I'faith, sirs, I smell mischief in't."

"You shall be obeyed," said the Treasurer, walking off.

"And now, Master Stanley, "pursued the Derbyshire Knight, with a solemn shake of the head, "what may have arisen in my manners or conduct this morning, which could warrant the ridicule that hath been so monstrously heaped upon me by the Lady Margaret Vernon, your brother, yourself, and your father's officer? Marry, sir, this doth seem to me to agree ill with those professions of friendship made me by yourself, independent of those general principles of hospitality and respect due to me as your father's guest."

"I'll tell thee, Knight, in one word, if I can for laughing," cried Stanley; "and thou shalt laugh too, despite thy gravity and vexation. — Thou art a raw lover i'faith, — ha, ha, ha!"

"How mean'st thou a raw lover?" said Sir Simon. "What did I wrong? What was not to thy taste?"

"Nay, 'twill be well if it suit the lady's taste," replied Edward. "By Saint Columba, thou art the most forward wooer I ever saw bend knee to fair maiden! Thou wouldst carry her by a *coup de main* — ha, ha!"

"*Coup de main!*" exclaimed the Knight, with a stare. "Was not all settled? Said she not you and your brother might wear the willow? Did she not laud me to my face before ye all? and did ye not threaten to hang and drown, and do I know not what violence on your own bodies? Wherefore the damsel suggested the happy hint of an elegiac strain in your remembrance. — Body o'me! what should I expect more? Have I not eyes, and ears, and senses?"

"Yea, thou hast all in wonderful per-

fection," replied his preceptor; "and if thou hadst used thy discretion but a moment, thou wouldst have perceived that by that cheerful acceptance of thine homage, Margaret Vernon meant not an immediate surrender of her heart. Is it to be thought that a young, beauteous, and noble damsel,—the idol and aim of many gay and gallant gentlemen,—should, on the trenches being first opened, beat a surrender without contest? Nay, Sir Simon, believe it not; even to thee that art, as she confesses, a paragon."

"Marry, but I believed it so," cried the Knight. "I deemed of her meaning by her countenance. It seemed to me, that she discarded your brother and yourself, and accepted my duty before all. How then could I fail, as a gallant gentleman, nay, as a man of honour, to prove that I intended to perform that which my mouth had uttered? I'faith, I understand not these niceties."

"It was at thine ignorance of punctilio we laughed," returned Stanley; "for, as thou wilt now perceive, thy tender was premature; and if it had not

been so, thou shouldst know better than to press a fair lady in public."

"I'faith, it is in public I would rather have her declare herself, than in private," said the Knight; "the woman to whom I shall dedicate my heart, must sacrifice to me the flattery and adulation of your butterfly gallants, that ever flutter around the beautiful maiden, and soil her with the powder of their gossamer wings. 'Fore Heaven, this would not do for me; she must be all mine, or not mine."

"Ha, ha! thou wouldst become cankered with jealousy, I ween," cried Edward, laughing heartily.

"Nay, if thou wouldst befriend me," said the Knight, "rid thee of that filthy bark: o'my life, I had enough of your laughing before; the vile sound still rings in mine ears. — What! thou wilt not? Marry I am right serv'd — very right; to be such a custrel, such a coxcomb as to believe in thy pretence of friendship. — Go to! I am right served i'faith."

"Nay," returned his companion, so soon as an intermission of laughter would allow him the use of speech, "I laugh

not at thee; but, by my troth, thy novel system of amours, and thy intended domestic arrangements, have tickled my fancy. Why! thou wilt be the Solon of married folk, the Lycurgus of the connubial state: but beware thou be not the Draco of matrimony; that thou write not its laws in blood."

"In blood!" cried the philosopher with emphasis. "I'faith, Master Stanley, I have no mind to kill or be killed. I would not yoke myself to a mate that seemed like to bring me to the gibbet."

"Pish! there are ways of silencing a woman," replied his preceptor, with a careless sneer.

"So there may, — so there may," returned Sir Simon; "though it suits neither my taste, nor my conscience to learn them. Heaven deliver me from homicide; and, most of all, from the murther of those I should be bound to protect!"

"Thou yet knowest nought of the sweets of wedlock," cried Stanley. — "Thou art married; and at first, within the honey-moon, like all lovers, thou and thy bride taste the delights of paradise;

all around thee is elysium, and the vile cares of the world pass by thee unheeded, as though thou hadst doffed thy mortality, and had already entered upon thy spiritual essence. But, mark the change: — thy love, call it so if thou wilt, begins to pall; satiety swallows up thine over-gorged appetite; to thy wife thou becomest indifferent; and to thee she becomes 'plaining and fretful. Perhaps, as it will by times happen so, thou seest another woman, fairer in thy mind's eye than she, thy wedded spouse — thou art devoured with love of this new object, and yet the galling chain of wedlock binds thee to a woman thou loathest. Thy new flame is, according to the world's word, virtuous; thou shalt possess her on no terms but those of marriage. Ha! now what wilt thou do with this clog that hangs about thee, and like a damning weight holds thee down to despair? Wouldst thou not break the link, and let it sink into the depths of ocean; while thou, lightened of its weight, should ride above the waves, and grasp thy happiness?"

"In plain words," said the Knight, composedly; "thou doest mean to ask whether, if I were tired of one wife, I would not commit murther upon her, to procure myself another? Now, Master Stanley, I answer no; and the reason, i'faith, is plain enough,—because I should run the risk of being hanged in this world, and I should have the certainty of being damned in the next; two matters, to me, tenfold more uncomfortable than living five hundred years would be with one woman."

The depraved youth regarded his companion for some moments with a fixed look, in which a slight shade of contempt was mingled with the lines of deep thought; and then he said, "Come, let us in to breakfast; we will afterwards go through our exercises."

"Nay, marry," cried the Knight; "I—"

"Forward!" said Stanley, seizing him by the arm, and pushing him towards the castle; "I will hear no nay upon the matter."

CHAP. XI.

There is a kind of man, Sir Bachelor, that shall talk you a whole summer's day, and yet say nothing. Of this nature, your soldier shall talk you of his artillery, until you fancy yourself a bombardier — your lawyer, of his testatums, until you witness yourself a bencher — your physician, of his catholicons, until you are sickened into a true Galenian; — and yet do they talk nothings to the end of the chapter.

THE REFORMADO CAPTAIN.

WE would willingly put our readers in possession of such knowledge as we ourselves possess, touching the breakfast of Lord Derby, his family, and guests, if we considered it at all necessary to the thread of our history; but as they are convinced, without the aid of our assurances, that living creatures cannot live upon air, but are of an organization demanding a constant supply of more substantial nutriment, they will naturally conclude that our dramatis personæ, from the coarse and gaunt Knight of Derby-

shire, to the beautiful and superhuman in loveliness Margaret Vernon, did break their fast; and whether it were upon beef-steaks, (as the rythmical eulogium upon the days of good Queen Bess, states to have been the wont of the ladies of her court,) or upon some articles of slighter stamina, it is not very amusing, nor, in this place, over profitable to conjecture. As a sort of pacis conciliatio, however, we will inform our readers that much time was not occupied in the consumption of their meal. It was ended speedily, as if the parties were constrained to eat, and were yet not so fond of table luxuries, as to sacrifice to them those hours which might be better employed.

On rising from the board, Edward Stanley took hold of Sir Simon's arm, and requested him to accompany him to the stables, for the purpose of selecting horses for the morning's exercise.

"Nay, marry," replied the Knight; "I must get to my morning studies. Let me see," he continued, pulling out of his pocket a small edition of Ana-

creon; "when we left Haddon, I was busy rendering the Carmina of the Teian into English verse. Where was I — Εις ἑαυτόν? — Nay, Εις ἔρωτα? — ay, right — here are my marks."

"Thou wouldst not gabble thy jargon before thy mistress," said Edward Stanley, indignantly.

"Yea, 'tis about love," returned the learned Knight; "a most charming combat, or, to hit thy sense, a most worthy and gallant just between Sir Cupid and Sir Anacreon."

"And which did overcome?" said Margaret Vernon.

"I will read ye the original Greek, most lovely lady-bird," cried the Knight, expanding the volume.

"Nay, if thou dost, I shall not understand it," rejoined Margaret; "I am not, in truth, so learned as your kinswoman, Master Edward, the hapless Lady Jane Grey."

"Ha!" cried the Knight, sighing; "that was a miracle of learning, as well as a phœnix of beauty. I have conversed of her with Roger Ascham five

hours by the clock. But if you understand not the original, I will read ye Henry Stephens's Latin translation :—

Libet, libet, jam amare.
Cupido me monebat
Ut amator esse vellem —"

"Stop, stop, Sir Simon," cried the damsel, laughing; "I do not know one word, save Cupid, thou hast uttered."

"Marry, thou art a great loser," exclaimed the Knight, figuring away with one hand, while he held the book in the other; "The purity and elegance of the translation are generally acknowledged.

At ego insciens —"

"Nay, Sir Simon, I am deaf," said Margaret.

"Deaf! i'faith, I hope not," answered the verbatim Knight; "thou didst hear plain enough but now; and the beauty of this version is sufficient to waken the dead — Insciens monenti

Parere negligebam.
Mox ergo sumpsit arcum —"

"But thou mightest as well repeat thy

Greek as thy Latin version to me," cried the maiden in a loud voice.

"Thou shalt have Anacreon himself, when I have finished Henry Stephens," pursued the obstinate poet: —

> Et auream pharetram.
> Me prælio lacessens —"

"By Saint Columba of the isles," cried Edward Stanley, laying his hand upon his dagger, "I shall attack thee, if thou dost not cease troubling us with thy folly!"

"Folly! an ode of the Teian bard, and the translation of the most learned and gifted man of this age, folly!" ejaculated Sir Simon, with a countenance indicating wonder and contempt; "and most of all, to be termed folly by a noble youth that understands, and might prize its beauties! Oh, that I was as he describes himself! —

> Ego vero, ut olim Achilles
> Lorica amictus, atque
> Scuto minax et hasta."

"Thou shalt be anon," cried Edward. "What, ho! Ormston, seek out harness

for this valiant Knight, and caparison my lord's Barbary horse."

"Nay, in sooth, I meant not,—that is, I will not swathe up my limbs in armour whilst I can do without," cried the Knight resolutely; "and your Barbary horse, forsooth, shall make a barbarian of me, if I throw a leg across his back."

"Be not afraid, Sir Knight," said the gentleman of horse; "the Lady Margaret might ride the barb with a rein of silk; he is gentler than a lamb."

"Talk not to me of being afraid, sirrah," replied Sir Simon; "I am not i' the humour. I will not ride; if your barbarous horse were as quiet as an ass, he would not suit me. Get along, sirrah; I am not in the humour."

"Fie, Sir Simon," said Margaret Vernon smiling; "if you aspire to become my knight, you must not make dainty of yourself: my chevalier must be capable of managing the horses of the sun."

"Then i'faith I'll barter that character for one less hazardous," returned the Knight; "lest, like Phaeton, I should

lose my balance, and fall victim to my ambition."

"I fear me thou art craven-crested!" said Margaret, with an emphasis of wonder; "I deemed thee a valiant and enterprising knight."

"Bernardus ipse non vidit omnia," returned the witless suitor; "but every man to his trade. I am a scholar, and defy any man to avouch that I have not been enterprising in the study of ancient, middle-aged, and modern literature; there is no book of eminent reputation, from Homer and Herodotus to this brightening era, that your servant hath not studied and digested."

"And how far have thy herculean labours," said Margaret Vernon, "taught thee the art of pleasing? What books have revealed to thee the secrets locked up in the human heart, and enabled thee by their cabalistic potency to draw aside the veil of dissimulation, which all, in a greater or less degree, hang before their thoughts? Canst thou read my fortune, most enlightened philosopher?"

"Nay, I should, indeed, wear the ape in mine hood," said Sir Simon, "were I to advance, publish, and set forth by writing, printing, singing, or other open speech or deed, as the statute saith, any fond, fantastical, or false prophecy, upon or by reason of——"

"What the devil, man!" cried Edward Stanley, in a violent rage; "thou art not for visiting us with a recital of the whole statute?"

"I thought, peradventure, ye might not be conversant with the law," said the Knight, with great simplicity; "and I was, therefore, minded, as justice of the peace, to inform you of the penalties and pains attached to the breach of it. But if ye will be excused, it is your loss, though I mind not the trouble."

"But if thou mindest not the trouble of delivering such trash," cried Edward, "by my troth I do the hearing on't. It is a dog's vomit. I say, Sir Simon Degge, wilt thou ride?"

"Nay, I will not," answered the Knight.

"Then, fair Margaret," continued the youth, "shall I be honoured by esquiring ye for a few miles in the park, without this book-worm—this ungallant paper-moth; he is fit only to live in dust and cobwebs?"

"Ay, with good will, sir," answered Margaret Vernon; "and I will ride the barb this valiant Knight is afraid to mount."

"Nay, most divine beauty!" cried the wooer, "prithee do not tax me with fearfulness. I will ride, if it be thy sovereign pleasure."

"It is my sovereign pleasure, then, most lowly subject," cried the smiling beauty, "that thou do instantly don thy harness, and mount thy courser; that thou mayst attend upon us as becomes thy duty."

"In harness!" exclaimed the Knight, with a woful compression of his lips. "I'faith, I am wholly unused to carry arms, and the wearing a suit of iron may be I know not how fatal to my life; but if thou wilt have it so, nevertheless—"

"Nay," replied the damsel, in her natural tone, "thou shalt not endanger thy health; ride as thou wilt, or not at all, if it like thee better."

"Marry, most bewitching maiden!" exclaimed Sir Simon, rubbing his hands in an ecstasy, "I will appear before thee in a dress worthy of thy servant. Thy goodness hath so cockered up my spirits, that I swear I am not what I was. I will prepare forthwith."

He left the hall and retired to his own chamber; whence, however, he speedily returned, changed in habit, and it seemed almost in character. He had clothed himself in a suit of pinkish-coloured velvet, the seams and edges of which were guarded with black stripes slightly barred with gold threads; and wore over his nether-stocks a huge pair of boots, similar to those of the military. These accoutrements the worthy Knight doubtless esteemed both magnificent and becoming; and his appearance was rendered still more captivating by a profusion of tawney-coloured ribbons, that were affixed to his black velvet hat.

After the ancient fashion, he wore a brawling sword, a long and heavy shabble, seldom used without its accompaniment the buckler; but since the late introduction of the rapier or small sword into use, this weapon had been by the gentry entirely laid aside. With his gay dress, which certainly gave the Knight a look somewhat less grave, though he still retained much of his awkwardness and embarrassment, he had assumed the spirit and vivacity becoming a suitor to a lady's favour; and with much self-complacency, and many sly peeps at his mistress, who, by the way, could not refrain from regarding him with scrutinizing glances, he strutted to and fro in the hall, in his own opinion the greatest personage in it, by no means excepting the Earl of Derby himself. He was by no one, however, beheld with so much interest as by his preceptor, the wily Edward Stanley; who, with the pleasure which fiends are said to derive from being witnesses of the follies and crimes of mankind, gazed upon the solemn fop that had fallen into

his toils, and laughed with great inward satisfaction at the monkey tricks which his victim played "before high Heaven." He contemplated with delight the ridiculous figure which Sir Simon cut before his mistress, as if he had, indeed, been jealous that any man, no matter how weak, or worthless, or contemptible soever, should rival him in the estimation, even of those persons with whom his connection was neither old nor intimate. Edward Stanley himself was utterly reprobate, and it was his study to communicate to all men that devilish cast of malignity that pervaded his own character; but he could not behold the favours of the good and beautiful occupied by any other than himself, without the gall of jealousy bursting upon his heart. So was it in this instance; and his joy ran over at his eyes, when he beheld Margaret Vernon laughing aloud at the eccentric and absurd figure of the Knight of Derbyshire. Sir Simon was not, however, to be again put out of countenance by laughter, which he really did not understand, although he affected

a thorough familiarity with his mistress's humour, and simpered, nodded, and winked upon her, to signify that he understood and participated in her enjoyment. This pantomimic action highly augmented the drollery of his appearance; and at length the roar of delight became universal, when the poor Knight, in making a sharp turn at the extremity of the hall, caught the rowel of one of his spurs in the strap of the other, and after floundering about some time with the hope of keeping his legs, came to the ground with a tremendous crash.

"Body o' me!" exclaimed the poet sitting upright; "the breath is nigh out of thee. — Marry, Simon Degge, thou wert a fool to be cutting capers like an ass, and in boots withal. Cut your salutations in boots! ah, woe betide!"

"Thou art not hurt, Sir Simon?" said Margaret Vernon, striving to repress her laughter; but really thy spirit is too gay for thy ponderous habit — come, let me help thee up."

"With all my soul," replied the Knight, giving her his hand; "I have

no will to lie here, and unless ye assist me, I am not like soon to rise — but thou must pull stoutly."

The damsel, although possessed of considerable strength, found herself quite incompetent, however, to the task of raising her fallen lover; who nevertheless, having got hold of her hand, was not willing to relinquish it. With her assistance he raised himself about a foot from the ground; but her strength then failed, and he fell back again with a woful outcry.

"Why didst thou not pull?" cried the unfortunate wooer, whilst the maid and the rest of the company stood laughing at him. "Ay, marry, much have ye to do to stand laughing, when ye should afford me your help."

"I would have helped you, Sir Simon, at first," replied Sir Thomas Stanley, assisting him to rise; "but I fancied the aid of your mistress would be more agreeable."

"Agreeable, quotha?" cried the Knight, scrubbing his back; "mighty agreeable is it to have your bones and

flesh beaten into jelly! 'Tis nothing for lads like you and Master Edward Stanley there, to leap about like a mummer on May-day; but when ye have turned five-and-forty, ye will be more staid, I'll uphold ye."

"Thou shouldst not confess thine age before thy mistress," said Edward Stanley in his ear; "thou wilt have her dreaming of trunk-hose and woollen night-caps, anon."

"And what if she does?" returned the Knight, coolly. "I have worn both for twenty years, and mighty comfortable are they, i'faith; far before your French silks, and sarcencts, that are fit only for streamers to flutter in the wind. But come, if ye will ride, let us forth. Most dazzling perfection! may I crave the honour of seeing ye to your horse?"

"Most gallant chevalier!" replied Margaret Vernon; "I attend ye with all pleasure. But first, Sir Thomas, I will thank you for my hood and mantle."

"Nay, I will fly," cried Sir Simon, hobbling away towards the retiring room, like a tortoise.

"Come back, Sir Knight," said his mistress, laughing; "thou canst not fly."

"No, i'faith, in these boots I find I cannot," replied Sir Simon, scanning those of Sir Thomas. "Pray ye, sirs, is it the fashion now to wear boots of a tawney colour as ye do. I deemed these right courtly, for they were my father's; and he, rest his soul, was a gay gentleman in his day. He had the honour of being knight of the pantry to his late Highness King Harry, and wore these identical boots at the field of the Cloth of Gold. Ye may observe that they have been escallopped with gold lace, though it be now somewhat tarnished."

"Faith they are as handsome boots," cried Edward Stanley, "as ever guarded the shins of a heavy-armed lancier. But forward, sirs; the day advances, and we loiter our time — to horse — to horse."

He presented his hand to Margaret Vernon, who, before she accepted it, said to Sir Thomas Stanley, "Do you not join us, Sir Thomas?"

"No, fair Margaret," replied her

lover. "I have some business regarding my lieutenancy of Man, with Earl Derby; if thou wilt excuse me, Edward Stanley and this gallant Knight will supply my absence."

"Farewel, then," cried the damsel, smiling; "thou mayst expect to hear of me being carried off — adieu."

Sir Thomas kissed his hand to his mistress as she withdrew; whilst Sir Simon, petrified at being superseded in his station of esquire to Margaret by Edward Stanley, stood silent and filled with chagrin.

"Art thou not going with them?" said Sir Thomas.

"Me? umph! Yea," replied the Knight, sullenly, and walking after his companions.

On arriving in the outer court, Sir Simon found his mistress already mounted on a most beautiful strawberry-coloured horse, of the real Barbary breed, whose symmetry could be alone equalled by his spirit and docility. The fine animal, as the gentleman of horse freed his bridle-rein, bounded around the court,

and exulted in the pride of his beauty and strength: he seemed conscious that he bore no common burthen, for he champed the bit and pawed the ground, as his lovely rider restrained his eagerness, with eyes flashing fire, and nostrils breathing clouds of smoke. Confident in her horsemanship, Margaret Vernon sat the horse with the greatest fearlessness, and even excited him to curvet and plunge, to the manifest terror of the timid Sir Simon.

"Ha! most divine, thou wilt be down," cried the Knight, extending his hands, but keeping at a considerable distance. "Ho, sirrah! master of horse, seize the rein, and let her alight; fly, sirrah!"

"There is no danger, Sir Simon," cried Margaret Vernon, pushing her steed close beside the Knight; "the horse is quite tractable."

"Marry, and it may be so," returned Sir Simon, retreating several paces; "but he is over gay for me. Hark ye, Master Ormston, let me have a sober and steady nag, sure-footed, and without such frisky tricks as this high-mettled barb hath. —

I'faith, I have a mind to return with whole bones."

"This palfrey is for your worship," said Ormston, pointing to a high and raw-boned trotting horse, which a groom led towards the Knight; "he is a patient and careful nag, your worship, fit for an elderly gentleman."

"Elderly gentlemen, quotha?" cried Sir Simon; "though I am not so elderly a gentleman, yet I have no wish to have my neck broke. Hold thy hand over his left eye, knave, and he'll stand better — soho, good fellow — soho."

With an effort, and assisted by the master of horse, the Derbyshire Knight gained the saddle; and immediately afterwards, Edward Stanley, Ormston, and half-a-dozen attendants, mounted their horses. The outer gate was expanded, and Margaret Vernon, giving the rein to her barb, rode off upon the green turf of the park, as fast as her steed could gallop, followed by Edward Stanley; who, though he vehemently applied his spurs to the flank of his courser, a horse of great speed and mettle, soon lost sight

of the nymph, and her fleet Bucephalus. The Knight of Derbyshire, who was fearful of suffering his palfrey to go beyond a hand gallop, lagged far behind; and the gentleman of horse and the attendants, unwilling to ride before their master's guest, lingered in company with him. But Sir Simon, notwithstanding he observed in his companions symptoms of dissatisfaction, and a violent inclination of ridding ground, as the Derbyshire phrase is, would not make any use of his spurs, which hung in terrorem with ponderous aspect over the side of his horse, though hitherto the wearer had found no necessity to use them. The Knight, in fact, was not one of those feeling people whose sympathies and affections beat in perpetual unison with those of their neighbours: his desires and his gratifications were commonly selfish, and bore affinity to the desires and gratifications of others no further than they joined the current of his own. Thus, when the impatience of his attendants began to vent itself in the utterance of terms of *manege* to their horses, as if they were incapable of re-

straint, Sir Simon either heard not or did not pay attention to these broad hints, but kept the even tenor of his way, without looking to right or to left, and with his bridle-rein still tightly drawn. At length, the servants, finding their skill ineffectual to increase the speed of the deliberate Knight, ceased to rouse the mettle of their horses, and suffered them to amble at an easy pace. As they thus rode gently along, Sir Simon observed at a considerable distance, though directly on their way, a large wood of high, branchy, and ancient trees, which seemed coeval with the foundation of the castle, and skirted at least one half of the horizon. At this sight, which for lack of using his eyes he had not discerned before, the Knight drew up his palfrey, and turning to the gentleman of horse, who rode at his elbow, said with a chagrined countenance, "Why, Master Ormston, by St. Peter and St. Paul, the Lady Margaret Vernon and Master Edward Stanley must have entered yon wood."

"'Tis like, sir, they are gone to the

Eagle's Nest," answered the gentleman of horse.

" Nest, i'faith!" cried the Knight; " marry and amen, that this young eagle don't swoop up my dove."

" I have known a full-grown bird fasten on a lamb," said Ormston; " and the old story says the ancestor of the Lathoms of Essex was found by Sir Thomas Lathom of this tower in an eagle's nest."

" Marry, where?" exclaimed the Knight.

" In the wood, yonder," answered Ormston; " and he would have been his heir had not his daughter married the valiant Sir John Stanley. Master Edward has taken the lady thither, I'll be sworn; for the place is known for luck to a Stanley's love-tale."

" Is it, i'faith?" cried the Knight, with woful eagerness; " put on, sirs — ride, sirs, ride."

He pushed his horse into a pretty smart gallop; but being unused to so quick a motion, and not being a perfect master

of the science of horsemanship, his feet became unmanageable, and as he rode along, at each bound of the horse his spurs were unmercifully dug into the flank, until the animal, stung beyond endurance by a stroke of more than common severity, flung up his heels into the air, and in a trice laid the unfortunate rider at length upon the earth. Wild with affright, the fallen Sir Simon lay stretched upon the ground, incapable either of arising or of expressing a wish for assistance; and even when his companions, with stifled giggles, raised him from the earth, and supported him on their shoulders, it was a considerable time before he could break the trammels which fettered his whole faculties. At last, however, after an amazing effort, and with a sigh which seemed to rend his bosom, he turned about, and said, "Let us return."

"Will you remount, Sir Knight?" said Ormston.

"What! this incarnate horse-fiend?" cried the fallen chevalier. "Nay, I

will marry the devil's widow sooner. I will walk, sirs; so, go where it suits ye."

Ormston tendered himself as his companion homeward, whilst the servants clapping spurs to their steeds, soon entered the wood.

CHAP. XII.

Nay, if the gentle spirit of moving words
Can no way change you to a milder form,
I'll woo you like a soldier, at arms' end;
And love you 'gainst the nature of love, — force you.
TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

IT is now time for us to pursue our winged Camilla, the chase of whom had been abandoned in so unknightly a manner by Sir Simon Degge. She was followed, however, with determined perseverance by Edward Stanley; who, although completely distanced, and at one time out of sight, arrived just in time to see her enter a broad avenue in the wood which led to that romantic part of it called the Eagle's Nest. The possibility of overtaking her at the speed she rode, was out of question; but Stanley, knowing that the road she had taken made a serpentine sweep before it arrived at the Nest, availed himself of his knowledge of

the wood to get thither by a shorter, though less pleasant path.

The scenery forming the glen, the traditionary scene of the Eagle's Nest, was composed of features bold and rugged. The narrow way by which Edward Stanley descended into it wound around the base of a perpendicular rock, the sides of which were fringed with mountain-ash and other hardy plants growing from between the very ribs of the stone; whilst at its foot, a narrow border of rich sward, grown over with the many-flowered heath, the delicate blue-bell, the wild strawberry, the white and red fox-gloves, various kinds of pansies and other forest flowers, which were now in their bloom, separated the rock from a crystal stream. Its head was crowned with a dark circlet of firs; and in front, beyond the rivulet, an impenetrable barrier of linked oaks, leaving a broad path of turf through the midst of the glen, masked its beauties and terrors from all observation beyond its immediate precincts. In the upper part of the rock, an eagle's nest had been known, accord-

ing to the traditions of the country people, for several centuries; and at this time, a bird of that species was said to tenant it, and to hold undisputed possession of the neighbourhood. If, indeed, silence and solitude were any proofs that the glen was infested by the tyrant of birds, it was probable he had there fixed his abode, for neither the jay nor wood-pigeon, so fond of shade and retirement, was observed there; nor had even the hawk and raven dared to choose the palace of their sovereign for their dens of destruction. The rook, as he passed by, soared far aloof in the air, and stifled his clamorous note; whilst the noble stag bounded through the valley, without daring to stoop to the water to quench his summer thirst.

Edward Stanley having dismounted, tied his horse to a tree, and seated himself upon a rude bench, carved out of the trunk of an aged oak which had been thrown down by the wind. Here, with arms folded upon his breast, he sat with curious eye, scanning the bold front of the rock, and casting frequent glances upon

the nest of that ferocious bird, that bore so kindred a likeness to his own character.

"The eagle, ay, the eagle!" whispered Stanley to himself; "how often have I wished to be that bold bird, that I might gaze defiance upon the sun! Men call him a tyrant, a rapacious and bloody devastator! but what are we? He but acts as the conqueror of his kind; he slays and devours until he is satiated, and so do we; it is our nature, the nature of all things that breathe. Each man raises himself according to his power upon the ruin of his neighbour; and the greater the harvest of his oppressions, the wider is his fame spread, and the more lofty is his report. All our passions and desires are gratified at the expence of others. Yon maid — so lovely, so frank and generous, so full of spirit and flowing wit, that she seems above humanity — must fall before my love. She is my prize, my object, my thirst — I burn and die for her. She must be mine own — ay, mine own."

He rose from his seat, and walked to and fro upon the turf, while his eye

blazed, his heart sobbed, and his whole frame trembled with the vehemence of his passion. At length, the sound of a horse's foot announced the approach of Margaret Vernon, whose palfrey, covered with foam and sweat, carried her with a more gentle and temperate pace than when she set out. The lovely rider, glowing with the exercise, had thrown back her hood; and a portion of her hair escaping from its confinement, hung with negligent grace around her shoulders. As she drew nigh to Edward Stanley, whom she surveyed with a look of surprise, she checked her horse and said, "Ha! Master Edward, I thought you were far behind."

"Had I kept your road," replied he, "I should have been a laggard indeed. There is no horse may match the barb; and when we next ride I will exchange palfreys with you, that I may have the enjoyment of your company. But alight, fair Margaret, and rest ye awhile in this shady glen."

"Not so, Master Edward," returned

the damsel, blushing; "it is not seemly."

"Nay, but for a moment," pursued the youth, advancing to her bridle; "Ormston and his fellows, with the good Knight, Sir Simon, are at hand, and will be here anon. Come, let me help ye."

"I need no help, sir," replied Margaret, leaping lightly from the saddle before he could take her hand. "I am used to alight without assistance. But what place call ye this, sir? It is somewhat like the glens and rocks of my own country. Ay, indeed, it might be Chee Tor, with the sparkling Wye gliding at its foot."

"This," replied her companion, "is the scene of that famous story, whose incidents have given to the Stanleys their family arms."

"You mean, touching the eagle and child," said Margaret.

"Ay, even so, fair Margaret," cried Edward. "Beneath that rock did Sir Thomas Lathom pick up his pretended foundling Oskatel, the child of his own blood, though born, as the world terms

it, basely. He would have made him lord of his immense possessions, had not his daughter, who married my ancestor, the valiant Sir John Stanley, furnished him with a legal heir. Sir Oskatel was blasted in his hopes, and the Stanleys bore afterwards for their device, an eagle in the act of devouring a babe."

"Ha! this insulting triumph was cruel," exclaimed the damsel.

"Think ye so, fair love?" said Stanley, taking the hand of the lady; "those times were more rugged than our silken days; but, pry'thee, seat yourself on this block, till the knaves come up."

"They are long in appearing," said Margaret; "we had best ride onward."

"Nay, not so, sweetheart," returned the youth, whose confidence began to be more plainly marked; "you must tarry and listen to me."

"What mean ye, sir?" said Margaret Vernon seriously; "am I way-laid in your father's park?"

"No, my angel, believe it not," cried Stanley; "though my tale is one of love, and no place can be fitter than this so-

litude for the mysteries of lovers. This place too, hath ever been propitious to a Stanley's wooing; these oaks, this rock, and this limpid stream, have been obtested in the vows of many a man of my house made happy by the enjoyment of his love; and if they should witness my shame and rejection, I would curse and denounce the genius of this place as leagued against my happiness."

"Sir, unclasp my hand, or ——"

"Nay, thou would'st not swear, dear Margaret; but if thou didst, I would not let thee go. Sit down and hear me, for by St. German and every saint of the isle, we will not part till thou hast heard me."

"Nay, then I will hear thee another time," cried the maiden, who now began to be alarmed at the vehemence of his manner.

"Another time!" replied Stanley, with a lip of scorn; "think'st thou that I, like yon doting fool, will give credit to every word thou do'st utter? No, my beauty, not even from thy sweet mouth; and if thou would'st hear me some other

time, why not now? This place is fittest for the confessions of love; the flaring sun is shadowed by these protecting trees, and the rippling brook would lend additional sweetness to the murmurs of the doves. Come, then, let us revel in pleasures. Be bounteous, my fair one, and save me the trouble of imploring thy love by a voluntary tender of thy heart."

"Your style of wooing, sir, is admirable for its singularity," cried Margaret, Vernon, indignant at this impudent proposal.

"Perhaps it may," answered Stanley; "but thou wilt find I am no common lover. I am not one of those that will attempt to amuse their mistresses with sighs and groans; but, nevertheless, my passion is as fierce as theirs who can. I like not your seven years' courtships, passed in telling my sweetheart that I love her, whilst my fruition is held aloof by a frigid and insensible daintyhood. No, marry, give me heart for heart. I am thine now, and I would have thee mine presently. Life, as the moralist

says, is but a span, — 'let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die.'"

"Fie upon thee for an audacious libertine!" exclaimed the damsel, who, notwithstanding her alarm at his wildness of manner, was moved beyond the power of repressing her feelings. "Take not the words of the Scriptures into thine unholy mouth, or tremble lest thy blasphemy meet retribution."

"By St. Bride," cried Stanley, gazing on the flushed features of the damsel; "thou art the most lovely enthusiast my eyes were ever blessed withal — retribution! ah, let it not lie in thy frown, and there is nought of ill I will not brave undauntedly. Let death by tortures seek me this day, and if he find me revelling in thy bosom, I am content — let him strike."

"Thou would'st not dare, Edward Stanley, to insult me thus," cried the maiden, bursting into tears; "but thou see'st I am lorn of protection; thou did'st lure me from horse by a mean and subtile falsehood."

"In love, sweetheart," replied the

heartless debauchee, "all stratagem is fair. I should not, indeed, have had the wisdom of the serpent, had I told thee of my purpose before thou dids't dismount. Nay, i'faith, yon gentle barb is over-swift to trust a coy maid withal. Had I given the world a second edition of Apollo's losing his Daphne, I should soon have measured the lover's leap from yon rock."

"Not you, sir, you dare not," returned the maiden, endeavouring to excite his pride; "you are but courageous in waylaying defenceless women, and offering them insult where they should have protection."

"Twice, Margaret Vernon," said Stanley, with an air of stern contempt, "hast thou uttered that silly word, dare; as if, forsooth, a passion so base and worm-like as fear could tenant the breast of a Stanley; and, most of all, of one who has to win his fortune by his sword. Thou may'st believe me, fair one, when I tell thee, that for very sport, without fee or guerdon, have I thrice staked my life against the prize fighters of Paris,

in single combat, naked to the shirt, and without defence, save this slender rapier. Before my cheek was darker than thine, love, I had tasted the air of battle; the odours of blood, and fire, and smoke, were as familiar to me, as to thee and thy taffaty suitors, the fragrancies of the rose and the lily. Think, then, if I am like to dread chastisement for my temerity? Nay, in sooth, a darkening glance of thy eye, were I at all penetrable, would weigh with me more than thy protectors drawn up in battle against me."

"And one of them," said the maiden, averting her head.

"My brother!" cried the ruffian, drawing her closer to him; "ha! Margaret, build not upon that; thou art on the sand, and it will crumble beneath thee. Thomas Stanley is a gay knight and a gallant: he is worthy the blood he springs from, and may wot full better how to whisper a love-tale into a fair lady's ear than I do; but his soul is not made of the same stuff as mine; he is the minion of honour, whilst she will accept easy service; the ocean he sails on is smooth

and placid; but I have lived in the hurricanes of life, and have sought my object, call it if ye will, a selfish one, through storm and fire: neither heaven nor hell could avert my fixed gaze from the suns that I worshipped, and thou art one; I have thee, and by my soul we part not as we met."

"And hast thou no sense of hospitality?" said Margaret Vernon. "Wilt thou wrong the guest of thy father's house?"

"Would ye talk to the lion of courtesy when he rages with hunger?" answered Stanley. "If you urge the ties of hospitality to thwart my passion, I utterly discard the word as a worthless vagabond; nay, I will disclaim all ties of sociality, and revert to a state of nature, rather than lose thy beauty. I would not part with thee to be esteemed a saint in virtue, or an Alexander in generosity; neither will I forego thy possession, though I be branded with the vices of Caligula."

"And dost thou think, false traitor," cried the maiden, "that thy outrage will go unrevenged? My father, thou

knowest him, a man little patient of injuries, will wreck a bitter vengeance on thine head; beware, then, whilst thou may'st."

"And if thy father were indeed so formidable, gentle Margaret," replied Stanley, "thou would'st not, I'll be sworn, excite his revenge. Thou would'st not betray thy love."

"My love!" ejaculated the damsel, with sovereign scorn.

"Ay, thy love," returned her persecutor in the same tone, for such I am, and will be. I am not used, fair Margaret, to dally my time. I am for the storm instead of the blockade — Thou shalt become mine. The hour that has seen the first of my vows shall witness my joy complete; nay, struggle not, my queen, thou art beyond aid."

"False villain, thou liest," cried the indignant maiden; "I shall have aid when thou hast none. What ho! help, sirs! rescue! rescue!"

The damsel, whose voice was as powerful as it was beautifully modulated, made the wood echo with her cries, and forced

Stanley to the exertion of all his strength to prevent her escape. The horses, frighted with the struggle, broke from the trees to which they were tied, and galloped off at full speed down the broad avenue to the park, so that the damsel now seemed bereft of all hope; but at length, when her voice became more feeble, and her strength was almost wearied, a man appeared on the rock above, and bade the villanous ravisher to forbear.

"Curses on thee, villain!" cried Stanley, drawing a pistol from his breast; "get thee gone speedily, or I will slay thee out of hand."

"I would thou could'st, proud ruffian," replied the man, who proved to be the fanatic brought by the Earl from Southport. "I am doomed to my fate; if thou art my slaughter-fiend, I hail my hour."

"Ha, Ashby! exclaimed the damsel; "Is it thou that Heaven has sent for my rescue? Good fellow, shout aloud for help; raise thy voice speedily."

"If thou dost dare to speak above thy breath, thou shalt die, by hell," cried Stanley.

"My days are not in thy hand," answered Ashby, and raising his voice to its utmost pitch, he roared aloud for help and rescue with wonderful vociferation.

"Take thy death, villain!" cried Stanley, discharging his pistol at the enthusiast.

"God protect him!" cried the maiden.

But whether Edward Stanley had not in his hurry taken a sufficiently precise aim, or the ball had struck upon somewhat in its flight, and either glanced aside or rebounded, is uncertain, but the stranger escaped wholly unhurt; and so careless did he appear about his own life, that his voice neither ceased nor wavered at the weapon's explosion.

"Thou hast escaped me, slave," cried Stanley, "but it shall be but to prove thy slender service; come, fair love, let us retire into the wood; let us quit this madman whilst he call his fill; come, sweet one."

"Ashby," exclaimed the maiden, frantic with terror, "loosen a piece of rock, and cast it down upon us; dash

me to pieces, so that you save mine honour."

"Yea, I will soothly," cried the man, pulling up a large fragment of stone. "I will assail this Philistine. I will grind him into powder, and scatter him unto the winds."

But before he had actually thrown the stone, the hurried gallop of horsemen was heard at a distance in the avenue, with shouts of 'Margaret Vernon' uttered by many voices.

"Rescue is at hand," cried Ashby, laying down the stone. "It is Sir Thomas Stanley and his fellows — wo to thee, proud ravisher; the avenger is upon thee."

As he uttered these words, the fanatic disappeared behind the rock. Edward Stanley instantly quitted his prey, who burst into tears and sank upon the seat overcome with joy at her deliverance. The fierce despoiler, foiled of his prey, gazed upon her with a look of savage rage, and muttered between his teeth,

"Thou crocodile!"

"Fly, sir," cried the damsel, rising

up and dashing aside her tears; "fly, whilst you have yet an opportunity. Villain as thou art, and pitiless to others, I would not have thee fall in the midst of thy crimes."

"Nay, Margaret Vernon," returned Stanley, deliberately, and feeling that his rapier hung loosely in the sheath; "it is not my life thy charity dost prize, but that of thy minion, my brother. No man of this rout, save himself, dare lift hand against me, though he knew the facts of this adventure. If Thomas Stanley become my foe, maiden, let him beware — he is no match for my arm."

"But fly," cried Margaret, and he shall never know of thine outrage; "the safety of a good man is sure more precious than the punishment of a bad one."

"Well, fair love," cried Stanley, with calm insolence; "since it is thy commandment that I quit ye, I will obey — but that fatalist must be silenced. I will follow him speedily."

"Nay, Edward Stanley," said the maiden, with an imploring look, "be not so depraved as to add to thy sins the mur-

der of a fellow creature. Let me see that thou hast some touch of humanity to redeem thy wickedness; do thou but spare this man, and I will freely forgive the wrongs thou hast done me."

The libertine was shaken by this appeal, and drawing nigh to the lovely pleader, he dragged her hand forcibly to his lips, and cried, "Be at rest; he is safe; I will not harm the fool: but I must follow him lest he divulge this matter."

"Tell him he may not speak of it until he talks with me," cried Margaret Vernon; "It will be sufficient; and now fly, sir, I beseech ye."

"I am gone, proud beauty," answered Stanley, casting a lingering glance upon her; "farewell, — in public we stand as before."

The maiden waved her hand, and turned away, as the bold and active soldier, at one bound, cleared the brook, and alighted on the copse beneath the rock. With the confidence and audacity of a wild goat, he ran up the rocks, sometimes trusting his whole weight upon a tottering stone, and then swinging him-

self from crag to crag by the assistance of the fibrous roots of the trees which grew out of the rock. In a few minutes he stood upon the outer ledge of the precipice, and looked down upon the maiden, to observe if she had not witnessed his activity and courage. But she still had her back turned upon the rock, and his heart sickened with chagrin at her indifference. He did not dare to look again, lest his hot spirit should overcome his prudence, and hurry him back to the encounter of his brother's wrath, and perhaps to the commission of some deed of bloodshed. With a heart, therefore, boiling with indignation, the ferocious soldier sank beneath the rock; and immediately afterwards, his brother, Sir Simon Degge, Ormston, and the rest of the attendants made their appearance, bringing with them the two runaway horses. The Knights instantly dismounted, and approached the damsel, who, on beholding her lover, could not, with the most determined exertion, refrain from again falling into tears.

"Ha! dear Margaret," cried Sir Tho-

mas Stanley; "in Heaven's name what hath happened? Where is Edward Stanley?"

"Nay, nothing," answered the maiden, endeavouring to smile; "but I am right glad to see ye. This is a lonely glen, and I was sorrowful for company."

"How came ye here alone?" said Sir Thomas. "Sir Simon says Ned Stanley escorted ye."

"He did," answered Margaret; "and we alighted in this valley; but we had not rested long before our steeds took a fright, and fled the way ye came."

"And so Master Edward Stanley did run after them, like a courteous squire," said Sir Simon. "Marry, Master Ormston, thou knowest I did see a man at a distance, and it was questionless Master Edward."

"But thou art not wont to lose thy countenance for trifles, Margaret," said Sir Thomas; "I fear thou hast been frighted as well as the horses."

"Marry, 'tis like the eagle ye spoke of, made his appearance," said the Derbyshire knight, very gravely; "i'faith, 'tis

a savage creature, and worthy of special forbearance; mark'd ye his talons, fair ladybird?"

"No; for I saw no eagle, sir," answered the maiden heavily; "I have indeed been frighted, and the occasion was thus—"

Their attention was broken by the fall of a piece of stone from the head of the rock, which tumbling down the crags, alighted with a heavy splash in the rivulet beneath. But as it frequently happened that detached portions of the stone and shale fell into the valley, no one but the damsel regarded the occurrence as anyways singular. She, however, was convinced the stone was thrown by Edward Stanley, whose face she had, in fact, observed the moment before peeping from among the copse-wood on the height. With an endeavour, therefore, to dispel her gloom, Margaret Vernon continued with a gay tone, "Ye would laugh at me, if I were to tell you what frighted me, so ye must rest in ignorance: let us mount and return; your brother must find his way afoot."

Though Sir Thomas Stanley was not quite satisfied with this conclusion, yet he could not, without rudeness, press the point further; and they left the glen without any additional discovery.

CHAP. XIII.

——— a brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms,
That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty
My practices ride easy.

LEAR.

On arriving at Lathom, Margaret Vernon, whose spirits demanded some repose after such violent agitation, retired to her chamber, where, had she not forbid it, the kindness and care of the Countess, who had learned that she was indisposed, would have visited her with a world of attendance, cordials, and restoratives. Sir Thomas Stanley, in whose mind some suspicion lurked that his mistress had suffered more than she would reveal, awaited with impatience the arrival of his brother, and unable, at length, to support his anxiety, walked out into the park to meet him. He had not, however, proceeded far before he

beheld Edward Stanley, engaged in deep conversation with another man, advancing towards the castle; and as they drew nigh, Sir Thomas perceived that the brow of his brother was flushed with rage, and his eye rolled with the wildness of unsubdued indignation. The countenance of the stranger, also, exhibited marks of anger, mingled with traits of scorn and abhorrence; but on their near approach, each of them endeavoured to conceal his perturbation, and to assume a look of cool and careless indifference. This mutation of visage was easily effected by Edward Stanley, who came towards his brother with a smiling air; but the stubborn features of his companion would not so soon bend to the transformation. They softened, as the iron hot out of the forge, by slow gradations loses its heat, but to the last retains a cast of its fiery glow; so, with the stranger's affectation of placidity, were blended occasional features of returning wrath and defiance. These, however, were not critically observed by Sir Thomas, whose chief business lay with his brother.

"I have impatiently awaited thy return, Ned Stanley," said the Knight. "Somewhat hath happened to Margaret Vernon, of which she makes a mystery, but it has affected her greatly."

"Happened!" replied the traitor, affecting surpize; "our horses broke loose and left us i'the lurch; but that should not frighten her."

"Nay, it was not the flight of your horses, which we brought back to her," pursued his brother; "for she confessed she had been frightened, but by what or whom, she will not declare. Saw'st thou nought in the glen?"

"Nought, save it were this man," answered Edward Stanley; "and 'tis likely that he alarmed her; for he sprang up on the rock-head of a sudden, and she shrieked lustily; but when he disappeared, she mastered her agitation. I heard nought further of the matter, nor saw living thing else that might disturb her."

It was well, perhaps, that Sir Thomas Stanley did not catch a glimpse of the

stranger's countenance during this recital, for the expression of amazement and disgust which it wore, would have inspired him with some doubt of his brother's veracity, and have led him into a more minute investigation.

"Who is this fellow?" said Sir Thomas; "What does he here?"

"The Earl brought him from Meols," answered Edward; "he was playing the hermit on Southport Sands. But he claims knowlege of Margaret Vernon; and i'faith, I now remember she called him Ashby, and bade him hurl down, — curse on it — I mean, come down from the rock."

"Nay, 'tis a lie," cried Ashby with great scorn.

"Dog!" roared out Edward Stanley; "if thou wert not as abject as this turf I tread on, I would beat the soul out of thy body. She called thee Ashby. Is that thy name?"

The man refused to answer.

"Speak, sirrah," cried Sir Thomas, indignant at his pertinacity; "or thou

shalt be made forthwith. Is that thy name?"

"Yea, Sir Knight, it is," replied the stranger.

"And what was thy business in the park?" said the Knight.

"I was led thither by Providence," returned Ashby, "and saw Margaret Vernon and this man ride toward the wood. I was afoot, or I should have followed that precious jewel, and kept her in my eye, but she outrode both him and me."

The man paused, and looked grimly upon his foe, who smiled scornfully in reply.

"Well sir, what then? This was in the open park," exclaimed the Knight; "how came ye upon the rock?"

"Your brother (if he be so,) turned off," continued Ashby; "for the purpose, as it appeared, of meeting the damsel; I followed him unseen, and keeping within the wood, a path to the right of his road led me to the head of the Tor. There I remained until the maiden drew

nigh. When I appeared on the rock, ah! how glad she was to see my face."

"Then thou didst know the lady, Margaret Vernon, intimately?" said Edward Stanley with marked emphasis.

"Yea, sir, intimately," answered Ashby; "and judge not of what ye now see of a lost and broken man, that I have always been thus wretched. Misery and disease have wrought a change in my person, or else my foot was as firm, my arm as nervous, and my heart as bold as either of yours. But a shadow hath come over me — the evil one hath power, and I am doom'd to wretchedness in this world, and torment in the next. I cannot desire to live, and dare not wish to die; prayer is ineffectual; — oh! I am lost."

"Seest thou not?" said Edward Stanley, whispering into the ear of his brother, who stood petrified with amazement.

"What?" replied the Knight.

"Are ye blind?" cried the fiend. "What do these agonies betoken? — remorse of guilt; and I fear me, the alarm

of your paragon, the chaste Margaret, portends little of innocence."

"Thou durst not say she is guilty," replied Sir Thomas, horror-struck at this insinuation.

"I would say but the truth, sir," returned Edward Stanley; "and that I will say, though it may perhaps offend thee. But why should it? If Margaret Vernon be not chaste —"

"Prithee no more, Ned Stanley, unless thou wouldst have me draw weapon on thy life!" cried his brother in a low and hurried voice. "Margaret Vernon is as chaste as the mother that bore thee and me."

"Ha! Margaret Vernon is an angel," cried Ashby, who overheard the last sentence of Sir Thomas; "she is full of charity and love to all; full of melting softness, and never-lacking generosity. If her prayer might have prevailed, I had long since been released from torment."

"Her fame," cried the Knight, with a fierce tone, "wants not thy varnish. The praises of a vagabond, like thou art, do but blur the fair report of an honest woman;

and as yet we do not doubt the virtue of this lady. But how comest thou, a beggar —"

"What have I asked of thee?" said the man.

"Curses on thine insolence," returned Sir Thomas; "art thou not a wanderer without means? a sturdy rogue and vagabond, that dost loiter around the country without earning honest bread? a lazy pilferer of the subsistence of those that are better than thyself?"

"A fanatical slave, or a hypocrite," continued Edward Stanley, "that would thrust himself on the world as a saint, by affecting to hold himself worthily damned."

"Tempt me no further, thou child of perdition!" cried Ashby, grinding his teeth with rage; "am I not honest? What shall withhold me from dashing thy pride this moment to the ground, and laying thee bare as this plain field?"

"Thou exquisite knave!" replied Edward Stanley, with a look resembling the indignation of insulted virtue; "what, if there was a chance of thy being cre-

dited, thou would'st invent some lie, false and damned as thine own soul, to slander me withal? Villain! what should withhold me from picking thy heart out with my rapier's point, but the dishonour so vile a wretch would bring upon my sword?"

"Do thy worst," said Ashby with a triumphant sneer; "I throw my defiance in thy teeth. Have I not told thee, hast thou not seen — that my sand is not yet run out? Were a host of fiends such as thou art, to stand armed against my life, I would laugh ye to very scorn. And if thou art commissioned to destroy this body, think ye I will pray your forbearance? Would Cain have retained his curse, if he might have doff'd it?"

"Thy curse hang on thee, then," returned Edward Stanley; "I will do thee no charity."

"Get thee hence, sirrah," said Sir Thomas; "and see thou be not found here to-morrow, or by my life, — but no, tarry at the castle till morning; I must know more of thee than thou hast yet unfolded."

"Were I not under duress, Sir Knight," answered Ashby, "thou shouldst know my history from my birth until this moment. Often have I seen ye at fair Haddon, and heard ye reported as a noble and generous youth, but I was not then the beggar and wretch thou dost hold me now; nor wouldst thou have dared, proud as thou art, to brand me with the name of rogue and vagabond. But Heaven's will be done — it is a part of my fate; — be it so. — I am content. Oh! that pain the most racking in this world, might deliver me from eternal torments!"

The Knight motioned with his hand for the enthusiast to quit them, and Ashby instantly walked away towards the castle, slowly followed by the brothers.

Sir Thomas Stanley, still smarting under the sting of jealousy, which he felt in proportion to the violence of his affection for Margaret Vernon, stalked irregularly along, communing with his own bitter thoughts; whilst his subtle and worthless brother, like the tempter-fiend, followed at his elbow, and with undivided

attention watched the operation of his poison upon his unsuspecting victim. Without any feelings of compunction or remorse for the pangs which his villany occasioned, Edward Stanley only considered that he had been anticipated, though unwittingly, by his brother in the love of Margaret Vernon, in the affection of that woman whose charms, enhanced by their difficulty of conquest, his foiled passions held up to him as requisite to his glory and happiness. To gain possession of these, the libertine thought it a light matter to snap the ties of faternal love, and to plot the destruction of his brother, — an object which, from this day, he began seriously to meditate, — at the same time taking especial care that his designs should be masked beneath the semblance of care for that brother's weal, and affection for his person. And although of all men Edward Stanley was by nature the least capable of passing by an insult or injury, he formed a resolution to take no umbrage at the kicks and plunges of his victim whilst enthralled in the meshes he should draw around him,

but to suffer him unresisted to flounce within the net, that he might be destroyed by the very violence of his own efforts to escape; and he soon had occasion to make use of his novel philosophy; for Sir Thomas, breaking at once from his cogitations, laid his hand upon his sword, and with a frantic air cried aloud, "By mine honour, thou art a base and shameless defamer, Edward Stanley, and unworthy of that honourable blood that runs in thy veins. Thou wouldst suspect a daughter of the Vernon, whose purity is as spotless as the souls of angels — and wherefore? What ground hast thou to doubt upon? what proofs even of folly to colour thy suspicion? Surely thou art not dreamer enough to suppose her in love with a mad-brained enthusiast, a lunatic and vagrant, that has more need of charity than the love of a wanton? Why doest thou not answer? Wherefore hast thou bound this viper to my heart, unless thou hast reasons fair and powerful?"

"I know not that I am bound by any tie," replied his brother, "to give reasons

for my speech to thee or others, any more than for the colour of my doublet. That which I see, I will speak of; and thou hast not to learn that, when need is, my hand can answer for my tongue. What care I for thy mistress? She is not to become my wife; and if she shriek and falter at the sight of one man, or of ten thousand, and choose to make a mystery of it, 'tis nought to me, though it be right marvellous; but I will speak on't, come weal or woe."

"But may not Margaret Vernon have known this man innocently?" said Sir Thomas; "this poverty-stricken wretch."

"He has not been always a pauper," cried his brother; "neither know we now that he is poor; indeed, so it is presumed from his figure — but we may chance on a mistake."

"Well, be he poor or rich," returned the Knight, "he is both a fanatic and in years."

"His years are none so many, by our lady," cried Edward Stanley; "and though he wear a puritan aspect, he may yet be a child of the devil at bottom; — and

if this new-found friend of your mistress be an innocent one, why did she not own him at first sight? He has been here since yesternight, and she must have seen him."

"That is not clear," replied Sir Thomas; "I saw him not myself before now."

"Pish, 'twas a trumped-up plot between these friends," said Edward Stanley, "his coming hither from such a distance, and to the very spot whither his mistress — yours, if ye will have it so, was destined. Her joy (you heard his declaration) at his appearance, which she could not contain — her concealment of it from thee."

"Nay, sir," cried the Knight; "she was about informing us of somewhat in the glen, when a stone falling from the height again alarmed her, and she would not proceed."

"A stone!" exclaimed the deceiver; "I found yon traitor on the very brink of the rock, with pieces of granite round him, after ye had left the glen; for, desirous of unravelling this mystery, since it touched our house's honour, instead of seeking the horses, I turned out of the

avenue, and ascended the hill. He it was, I'll be sworn, that threw down that stone as a signal; a sign of prohibition against further speech: the woman's tongue in her alarm might have proved honest."

"Nay, but such a lover!" exclaimed the Knight with derision; "so grave and puritanical, so wild and forlorn, so opposite in carriage to a man of gentle blood! Faith, if such a villain could gain her fancy, my heart would not long retain its jealousy."

"Thou knowest nought of this man but by appearance," said Edward; "and his features are comely. Now, mark ye, Tom Stanley — but yesternight, nay, this morning, the fool Simon Degge entertained me with the history of some romantic Knight, a man of gentle blood, though his name be unknown, that often plays the outlaw in Haddon and Chatsworth woods. The rumour was, that he wooed the elder daughter of the Vernon; and that Knight has charged his keepers with the capture of this gay cavalier. Why may he not turn madman or puri-

tan as well as a hunter of deer? If he were an honest gentleman, he would play no hide-and-seek after this fashion, but come forward with his love, and tell it plainly. Thou mayest ask thy mistress for a solution of her secret; but, by my troth, I think this fool hath fairly unriddled it."

With this information, to which the Knight could oppose no sort of objection, since he did not question that Sir Simon had reasons for his narrative, he was much struck, and seemed now to be aware that he stood on ground much less sure than he had supposed. He said nothing, but drew his hat over his eyes, and putting his arm within his brother's, walked slowly on towards the house. But Edward Stanley, who had no mind to part with him until he had made some arrangement of conduct which should prevent a discovery of his treachery, stopped short at about a hundred paces distance from the gate-house, and enquired what his brother meant to do?

"Do!" replied the lover; "I will unfold all to this deceitful woman,

and inform her that I am not ignorant of her amours. I will renounce all ties — all vows of love: beshrew my tongue that ever made any, and snap the chains that bound me to her. I have been her tool, but I am free and heart-whole. Oh, heaven! that form so fair should bear a heart so false."

"This will not do," said the traitor.

"Ha! that my dream of pleasure should end thus!" cried the Knight, leaning on the shoulder of his evil genius; "that where I have confided, I should find disloyalty — that where I have loved, nay, adored, I should meet falsehood and deceit. I will upbraid her with my wrongs. —"

"And she will laugh at thee," said his brother; "or with that wheedling devil which every woman possesses, she will again enchant thee, and blot thine honour with her treachery. No, follow my counsel, if you think it good; attend her back to Haddon, there she will be off her guard, and thine eyes being open, thou mayest with ease note her carriage. Whilst she is here, pass by this mystery,

and, after her own fashion, teach thy countenance to mask, rather than betray, thy feelings."

"'Tis a hard task, but I will strive to do it!" replied the Knight. "To clasp with a hollow heart that hand which I never touched before without a thrill of pleasure — to look with a deceitful smile upon that face whose beauty hath ever dazzled me, and charmed my soul."

"Thou mightst as well have looked upon a mirror," said his brother; "for to thee all was false: the glass is now broken, and the shadow fled; thou wert betrayed by an illusion; but thy revenge will be ample; when thou hast perfected thy proof, thou mayst openly disclaim her in her father's hall."

"Nay, Ned Stanley, that were unmanly revenge," said the Knight; "though she hath trampled upon my love and my honour, she shall know that I am worthy of better treatment. But thou dost go also to Haddon. Our journey hither was to take thee back with us. The Knight knew, how I am not informed, that thou hadst returned

from France, and wast in Lancashire. I fear, from some words he dropped, ye are engaged in some scheme of rebellion."

"Fear nothing," replied Edward Stanley, "whatever was, is past. The Earl knows all, and thou canst rely upon him. I would have stirred him, I grant ye, upon his own title to the crown, and Vernon would have drawn to his banner, but he hath declined risking his fortune."

"He hath declined troubling his conscience," said the Knight, "and worthily. Our father's claim to the throne of England is no better than those of many nobles, whose ancestors were allied in marriage to the crown. There are many nigher the royal stock than he is; and would ye have him cast the country into blood out of a lust of usurpation? I'faith, Ned, thy foreign wars have taught thee a wild morality."

"Morality!" replied the desperate youth, "it is for those that can afford to be possessed of such a quality, not for poor devils like me; it is of a value far beyond our cheapening. We must be

content with your second-hand virtues, and leave the cardinals to our wealthier competitors. Morality! talk of such a thing to a lancepesade, and he will tell ye, 'tis fit for neither gentleman nor soldier."

"But wherefore did'st thou hide thine intent from me," said the Knight, "and confide it to a stranger?"

"Because I knew thy relenting soul would bear no portion in our enterprise," replied Edward Stanley. "Thou art formed, Tom, for a churchman or a philosopher; thou art deeper studied in books than in the characters of men; and when thy mind is called upon to engage in an act requiring pith and spirit, thou art busy elaborating the morality on't, when thou shouldst be hand and heart in the work itself. Had I besought thee to join us, thou wouldst have worn out a year in settling thy conscience."

"And thou did'st find Earl Derby of a humour quite as squeamish?" said Sir Thomas.

"I found him as blind to his own

interest, and to the only good worth living for, —the charms of ambition, —as a mole," returned his brother with great vehemence. " Oh! were a crown hanging above my head, and there was nought to hinder me from grasping it but the twinges of a sickly conscience, I would stretch out my hand for this goodly prize, though it were a signal of slaughter to millions! I would make one bold leap into the sea of royalty, though it were a talisman potent enough to lash the ocean into a tempest!"

" Yea, Ned Stanley, but thou mightest be drowned in this storm of thine own raising," said Sir Thomas. " He that is prone to draw the sword, doth usually fall by it."

" I could nigh swear I am listening to that canting hypocrite who hath just left us," said the young libertine with a taunting sneer. " Was it thy love, brother, that taught thee these saws and scraps of morality; or hast thou since we last met become a reader of the scriptures after the new version? We shall forthwith have thee a puritan."

The Knight made no reply to the sarcasm of his profligate brother, but walked onward to the castle, and meeting his father in the court, turned aside with him, and left Edward Stanley to mature his schemes. And, indeed, this wily conspirator had need of some breathing time to draw out and arrange the several ramifications of his treachery, which he had spun upon the instant, and thrown upon action without deliberation or finish, lest his cobwebs should be unravelled, and he should fall a victim to his own arts; and upon examination he found that he had, in fact, used too much finesse in the unwrought management of his plot. In raising a dust to blind the eyes of his victims, he had in some measure brought a cloud over his own perceptions, which he found it absolutely requisite and exceedingly difficult to disperse. Thus, he had been fearful of conciliating the opinion of the fanatic, Ashby, by any expression of remorse for his outrage upon Margaret Vernon, because he could not then have raised the

anger of his brother against the enthusiast by a personal altercation, which greatly disposed the mind of Sir Thomas for the reception of any allegation unfavourable to his antagonist. And yet Edward Stanley perceived that it was necessary to further his designs, that he should by some means soften the anger, not only of Ashby, whose report abroad might be of disservice to him, but also to calm the indignation, and if possible to win the confidence of the very woman he had insulted. This, to be sure, was a task surprisingly difficult; but so bold and confidant was the mind of this crafty traitor, that he did not for a moment doubt of being able to convert his now implacable foes into his warm allies, and the manufacturers of their own destruction. This he intended to accomplish by begging an interview of Margaret Vernon; and by the exertion of all the talent of which he was master, to endeavour her conviction that he repented of his misdeeds, that he was sincerely desirous of pardon and reconcili-

ation, and that he was resolved, by a future devotion to her service, to wipe out the blot with which he was now stained. How he effected his purpose, our readers may learn hereafter.

CHAP. XIV.

Whether is best,—I prithee now resolve me,
The tree that wildly to luxuriance runs,
And spends its virtue in unuseful branches;
Or that which hath no sap to quicken vigour,
For want whereof it withers, pines, and dies?

THE DILEMMA.

ASHBY, on leaving Sir Thomas Stanley and his brother, proceeded directly to the castle, with the intention of visiting the Lady Margaret Vernon, in pursuance of her request by Edward Stanley; but, on his arrival in the outer court, he was met by a waiting-woman, who informed him that her mistress, fearful of awaking suspicion, could not see him in the day, but would walk on the terrace in the evening, for the purpose of meeting him, and she requested that he would clothe himself in some more usual dress than the puritanical garb he wore, to prevent discovery. This mutation, after some

conflict of conscience, he consented to, in the hope that he should be rendering service to Margaret Vernon; though at the same time he said, "I fear it is a doing of evil that good may come."

But the woman did not stay to listen to his throes of morality. She left him to settle the innocence or guilt of the measure with himself, and returned to her mistress. As she quitted the court, the door of the hall was opened by Sir Simon Degge, who stood and nodded to Ashby.

"Ha' ye done, sir?" cried the Knight, in a tone which plainly evidenced he had beheld, if he had not heard, the occasion of their meeting; "ha' ye done? I mean not to interrupt ye; take your own time. I am in no hurry; wait, and welcome."

But as Ashby made no reply to his civilities, and only regarded him with a broad stare, he advanced towards the enthusiast with a profound inclination of his body, crying, "I mean no offence, by Saint Ambrose! But when one has need to be private with a fair damsel, it

is safest to provide oneself with an Alectryon."

"Where didst learn thy new fashion?" replied Ashby with a sneer. "But of late thou didst not dare to take woman's name into thy mouth; now thou dost seem a-would-be gallant, a brute of that base herd that wallow in the mire of sensual gluttony."

"How knowest thou that?" cried the wonder-stricken Knight; "art thou skilled in astrology? or doth the devil aid thee to dive into men's thoughts?"

"There is little need of unnatural means to detect thy folly," returned Ashby; "it is stamped in legible characters on thy visage."

"Have I not seen thee heretofore?" said the Knight, looking the enthusiast direct in the face. "I have either met thee before or in my dreams; and it seems to me, that I have encountered thee on the hills of Derbyshire?"

"'Tis likely," answered Ashby.

"Then thou hast been in that county?"

"Yea; I have."

"And in the Peak?"

"Ay, sir; in the Peak."

"At Bakewell — Haddon — Chatsworth?"

"All: I know every hill within the honour of Peverel; every tor, scar, and stream in the Peak."

"Then thou wottest well of Bowdon, near the chapel of Frith: what thinkest thou of that place?"

"'Tis a poor homestead," replied Ashby scornfully; "a bleak and barren spot as ever crow flew over. The corn that will grow upon the land is not half enough to feed the wild deer: they hold the keeper out of possession."

"Deer!" echoed the Knight in a fit of cogitation; "thou art perchance a stalker of the deer, and see that thou be not brought before me when I sit as justice of the peace, or I shall quail thy pipe. — Bowdon a barren spot — marry, sir, it is mine own inheritance, and a right fair one too. I see thou art a presumptuous churl that knowest nought of the matter."

"I know both it and thee, Simon

Degge," cried Ashby: "thine inheritance is as fair as thou art wise."

"Thou art an uncivil knave," replied Sir Simon passionately. "Marry, now I remember me where I have seen thee; 'twas beneath the gibbet above Wardlow-mires: — thou wert then, I trow, contemplating thy destiny?"

"For once, sage justice, thou art right!" answered the fanatic with great energy; "when thou didst behold me, not a month since, beneath that gallows' tree, I was in the act of tying myself up to the branch, and getting rid of this villain world by a short and violent method. — I was damned before — suicide could not curse me further; but thou didst interrupt me, and I would not be the jest of a fool."

"I' faith thou didst lack philosophy," cried the Knight, laughing heartily; "i' faith thou didst. Thou shouldst have despised observation, and laughed at reproach. I see, I see, thou art but a half-bred knave — thou wouldst have untied the rope if it had been notched around thy neck?"

"So would I if it had been notched around thine. 'Tis a pity the world should lose so good a butt as thou art for mirth and ridicule."

"Sirrah!" exclaimed the Knight in great indignation, "thou dost see I wear a sword; and by Saint Peter who smote the Jew—"

"Ha! thou blind worm!" cried Ashby with frantic fury, "knowest thou so much of the Gospel? I deemed thee a savage in knowledge of the word. But if thou drawest sword on me, or dost raise thy hand against me, I will hold thee as a Midianite, and slay thee for a persecutor."

The Knight, whose courage was not of an extraordinary temper, felt his heart sink within him at the loud voice and demoniac aspect of his adversary, and his terror was no little increased by a sudden thought which struck his imagination that Ashby was mad. Stupified by this idea, Sir Simon stood with his hand upon his sword, his teeth chattering, and his knees knocking together, without having the power to flee from

the object of his apprehension, whilst Ashby regarded him with a look in which anger was subdued by scorn.

"Get thee hence, Simon Degge," cried the enthusiast. "I have known thee before to-day, and the value of thy menaces, else I would have put thee upon proof of thy mettle. Get thee hence; and instead of learning the lewd ribaldries of this besotted age, lust after the Book of Life—read the Holy Scriptures, which are more fit for a man of thy years and lost condition than the trash of Greece and Rome. Study thine own heart; — thou wilt find it worthless, depraved, and utterly naught."

"Not so fast, sir," replied the Knight, somewhat recovered from his panic, on beholding the abated wrath of his foe. "Thou dost think, peradventure, that I have never looked into the Testaments; but thou art deceived: I have read the four Gospels and the Epistles in manuscript finely painted and illuminated. They were, indeed, but a translation; yet the Latin, for the fifth century, was purer than is commonly met with."

"Well, and what learnt ye from them?"

"What learnt I? Marry, that's a question:—why, I cannot say I learnt much, for I had heard it before in parts, and my idea tallied pretty well with its general features. You know one can't learn what one knows before."

"What didst thou know, barbarian?" cried Ashby, with great vehemence, "Didst thou know that thou art cursed from thy birth?—that the awful denunciation pronounced by the Creator upon the first living, hangs over thee and all? that it can only be averted by regeneracy of spirit, a new birth of heart? and that this privilege is but extended to a few? Happy wilt thou be if thou art one—but now art thou dead unto righteousness—thou wilt not live—and I cannot, if I would.—Fool that thou art to trifle thy hour of trial upon the nothings of this world!"

The wild declamation of the enthusiastic Ashby again alarmed his timid companion, who looked on all sides for rescue or escape; but perceiving that the former

was not at hand, and that the latter was difficult to be accomplished, the terrified Knight was obliged to pacify his stern counsellor by acquiescence, and promise of amendment.

"Thou shalt see what I will become," said Sir Simon, earnestly. "Cato shall not surpass me in virtue, nor Saint Paul in spirituality."

"How comest thou to confound such names?" cried Ashby. "The virtues of thy heathen prototype were the product of pride, not of holiness. Before thou canst advance one step in the path of Christianity, thou must be ignorant as a little child."

"I' faith, that is not possible," returned the Knight; "for, though I say it, there are few scholars better versed in humane learning than I am; and I cannot, if I would, destroy my memory; and, marry, I would not if I could."

"Thou must be dead to all acquirements, steeled against all learning, insensible to all qualities, save the acquirement of spiritual inspiration, save the learning of gospel truth, save the qualities of

meekness, humility, charity, brotherly love and holiness. What means the glitter and parade of dead or living languages, if they do not help in that task for which alone men are born, the working out of their salvation with fear and trembling? Will Greek and Latin render ye more lowly, more pure, more benevolent — nay, do they not exalt pride and ambition? — do they not support a disposition to cavil and criticise even on things most holy?"

"Yea, they do, in good faith," returned the Knight; "for had not Luther, Melancthon, and their consorts been skilled in the ancient tongues, the Bible might have rested in obscurity. I thought thou hadst been a disciple of that pestilent heresy which of late hath overspread us, but I rejoice to find thou art a faithful son of the mother church."

"Fool!" exclaimed Ashby, again roused into extreme passion; "thou art deceived — I am indeed a faithful son of the mother church, such as it was under the governance of the apostles; but thy church is a bastard, a misbegotten abor-

tion, palmed for ages on the world as the offspring of our Redeemer, whilst his true scion was suppressed. Happily, the fiendish malice of your infernal superstition could not destroy the glorious babe. He hath again sprung upright, and in time will dash the scarlet whore from her gaudy throne—look to it, ye hypocrites! His star is seen once more—let Herod tremble beneath his triple crown."

"I thought thou hadst said thou wert damned," said the Knight, with some awe at Ashby's exclamations.

"Yea, so I am," replied his companion. "I am conscious that for me there is no more hope of eternal happiness than for that dead clod; but still I will rejoice in the work of salvation. I know that the Saviour liveth — it is the only thought that rescues me from unbroken despair. I would not sin, because sin doth even in this world bring with it its punishment. Virtue is its own reward; but faith is the master-key to eternal joy — without faith thou hadst better be never born."

The enthusiastic fatalist was interrupt-

ed in his speech by the entrance of Earl Derby and Sir Thomas Stanley into the court, and as soon as they were seen by the Derbyshire Knight, he looked upon Ashby with a contemptuous countenance, and said, "Get thee to thy kennel, heretical dog, or I will order my lord's groom to give thee chastisement. What thou hast now uttered against our holy church, be sure on't, shall not pass away without its reward. Get thee hence."

Without moving a muscle of his countenance, a placidity which increased the Knight's anger, Ashby was withdrawing, when Lord Derby, casting a hasty glance upon him, said,

"Ha, sirrah! how comest thou at liberty? I had forgotten thou wert to be put to question. Has thy raving yet subsided, or does the fiend still hold thee in thraldom?"

"I am in thraldom still," replied Ashby, sarcastically, "for I am within the walls of Lathom;—perchance your Lordship is the fiend."

"Fiend, i'faith!" exclaimed Sir Simon,

elevating his eyes. "Call the best earl in England a fiend! Marry, thou art a half-witted knave, or thou wouldst have been further off before thou didst use such compliments."

"What account hast thou to give of thyself?" said the Earl calmly, without noticing the rude answer of the enthusiast. "Whence comest thou? who art thou? what is thy business in this country? If thou wouldst not be committed to prison as an idle rogue, thou must answer fairly."

"Whatever thy ill-used power doth lay upon me," replied Ashby, "I must bear as I best can. I would have told thee when we first met, but thou wert too busy to hear my story. Now, I am too busy to unfold it. I will not, proud lord of a dark faith, stoop to thy pleasure. Thou wouldst not once — thou shalt not now."

"Well then, good fellow, I will not," returned the Earl, smiling, "but thy silence will harm only thyself. My duty bids me commit all those that have not the means

of livelihood, and will give no account of themselves."

"I am in doubt, my lord," said the mischievous Knight, "whether this holy man be not a deer-stalker. He hath confessed to me that it is his wont to wander over the hills of Derbyshire, and through the Peak Forest, whence he comes. This garb of his is a mask, a disguise. I but put a few questions to him before you came, and he forthwith doff'd his canting countenance, and threatened to slay me outright. I' faith he is perhaps one of the outlaws of Sherwood, a set of desperate knaves that think no more of shooting a man than I should of knocking down a wild duck."

"Outlaw!" exclaimed Sir Thomas Stanley; "what thinks your lordship? Is it not likely? This fellow's brawn and sinew belong rather to that brotherhood, than to the class of fanatics whose language and manners he doth ape so well."

"Sirrah!" said the Earl gravely, "thy freedom is in present jeopardy, if thou doest not clear thy character."

"'Tis like that he is only one of a gang," continued Sir Simon, "and that having made the forest too hot to hold them, they have come hither with an eye upon your lordship's deer. Trust not the villain's looks; he is a mere devil. I am myself pretty stout hearted, but he made me quiver from head to heel."

"He must indeed then be a Tartar," replied the Earl. "Now, sirrah, what say'st thou to these charges? Art thou within the law, and the queen's liegeman, or a self-banished robber? What witness hast thou to rebut the presumption which thine own conduct and declarations have raised to prejudice thee?"

"None," replied Ashby, with great composure. "I do not seek to remove your prejudice: do with me as it lists ye."

"Thou didst accuse thyself of monstrous crimes," pursued the Earl, "when we first met thee;—what was their nature? I command thee to answer."

"But if thou whistle to the wind," replied the fanatic, scornfully, "will it come to thee? Is any man without

crimes — ay, of a monstrous complexion? Art thou? — then art thou more holy than I took thee for."

"No man is without sin," replied Lord Derby; "but I trust I shall not go to the grave covered with such crimes as appear, if thou art not a base hypocrite, to drive thee into frenzy."

"Ha! thou art a self-righteous lord," cried Ashby; "but thy trust is rotten; thy staff will fail thee; — thou dost think thyself benevolent; thou art ostentatious; — thou holdest thyself affable and condescending; thou art cankered with pride; — thou art charitable to the faults of others, because most men are beneath thy regard; — thou wouldst not wrong the widow and the orphan, nor cheat thy creditors of their demands, because, if thou didst, their cries would be against thee; and thou art ambitious of popularity. Thus are thy virtues bottomed in vice; thou art beside lustful, haughty, impatient of superiority; dangerous to offend, because slow of reconcilement."

"Heard ye ever such a knave!" ex-

claimed Sir Simon with uplifted hands; "such a lying, defaming, slandering, and impudent villain; such a reckless, desperate rascal, who defies your lordship, and beards ye in your very castle. He a man of religion! He is a cut-throat for all his oratory — a fine-spoken desperado. I would not trust myself again alone with him for the duchy of Lancaster. Commit him, my lord; commit him to prison forthwith; I would have his ears nailed to the pillory, — a long-tongued rogue."

"If thou wilt not answer," said Earl Derby, "it must even be as the Knight says, thou must be conveyed to prison. Thomas Stanley call hither Ormston."

But the young Knight, too generous to take advantage even of a rival or an enemy, again questioned the enthusiast, who still, however, refused to reply. The Earl at length, wearied with his perverse humour, bade his son peremptorily to call the gentleman of horse; and Ormston soon appeared, followed by two other servants.

"Now, sirrah, wilt thou answer?" said

Lord Derby ; " or take up thy residence in the tower, until we have opportunity of sending thee to prison ?"

" If it be thy will, I must go to prison," answered Ashby carelessly. " But though thou wert as great a tyrant as the execrable Bonner, yet shouldst thou not force me to speak against mine inclination."

" Be it so," said the Earl. " Ormston, see this refractory knave suited with a lodging in the Eagle Tower."

" I'faith, he deserves the hard and strong pain," cried the Derbyshire Knight ; " a spice of it would soon bring him round : at best he should have but coarse bread and ditch-water ; he hath maggots in his head, and 'tis pity his body should be without."

" Ha ! thou art a right savage and hungry bigot !" cried Ashby to the Knight. " Well is it thou hast not a power capable of ministering to thy devilish cruelty."

" Peace, sirrah !" cried Lord Derby. " Ormston, away with him to the tower."

The gentleman of horse laid hold upon the arm of the fanatic, who made no resistance, and was conducting him across the court to the door of the turret, when Edward Stanley made his appearance from the hall.

"Stay!" he cried to Ormston, "what are ye doing, gentlemen? Ormston, whither art thou conveying Master Ashby?"

"How knowest thou his name?" replied the Earl. "He will not give account of himself, and is going to prison."

"Stay, there is no need," replied Edward Stanley; "he is well known, — the Lady Margaret Vernon knows him."

"Does she so?" exclaimed Sir Simon Degge, turning to Sir Thomas Stanley; "then, marry, he is not what he seems; he is a hawk in the feathers of a chatterpie."

"I pray ye loose him," said Edward Stanley. "It befits not that he be in durance: as a friend of the Lady Margaret, he is entitled to hospitality."

This he uttered in a loud voice, whilst Ashby, steady and composed, uttered

not a word, but kept his back turned upon the company.

" He is not that he seems," continued his advocate in a low voice; " but affects this habit and manner for some purpose best known to himself; but he is of quality, and should be treated with respect."

" Umph!" cried Sir Simon, nodding archly to Edward Stanley. " I know him — say nought of the matter — 'tis as I said;" and then whispering into the ear of Sir Thomas Stanley, he continued, " look to your mistress, — a sly fox, — dont you see it?"

Upon the information afforded by Edward Stanley, his father instantly ordered the gentleman of horse to release his prisoner, and advanced towards him for the purpose of apologizing for the rude treatment he had received, which however he excused by reason of his ignorance of his quality, and intimacy with Margaret Vernon. Sir Simon Degge, also, observing the change that had taken place, overwhelmed Ashby with apologies and protestations of remorse for the

epithets he had bestowed on him. The enthusiast received the excuses and compliments of both with great apathy, and made no reply; but seemed anxious to quit the castle.

Whilst this scene was being performed, Edward Stanley took his brother aside, and assured him that all their schemes for the detection of the intercourse subsisting between Margaret Vernon and Ashby would be frustrated by committing him to prison; and that he himself must subdue all appearances of wrath or jealousy, if he wished to be satisfied on this important subject.

"It is needful to show a countenance of friendship and confidence," said the hollow traitor, "that they may not stand upon their guard; and I now am grieved that such hot words passed between this hypocrite and ourselves to-day; but his anger must be quenched by attentions and kindnesses; and see that thy spirit do not break out and mar our plans. Leave him to me, and though he be as close as a Jesuit, I will sift him to his heart's core."

Though the generous nature of Sir Thomas Stanley did not receive his brother's counsel without disgust and repugnance, yet, as he had no other reliance whereupon to rest the perfect discovery of his mistress's falsehood, he was obliged to remain silent, and acquiesce in the policy of this English Borgia. Having thus satisfied his brother with the part which he was performing, Edward Stanley waited until his father and the rest had withdrawn, leaving him alone with Ashby, who seemed in expectation of some explanation of the singular turn which his conduct had taken since they last met.

"Thou wilt think, Master Ashby," said the dissembler with a smiling countenance, "that I am of a weather-cock spirit, easily blown from enmity to friendship; but the truth is, I heartily repent *me* of the base and unmanly crime I this morning committed against the Lady Margaret. I would strike off this hand, if it might be recalled: but it is my design to see her once more, and crave pardon for my sin; and to endeavour by

future respect, and service, if it may be, to wipe out the heavy stain that has defaced my character."

"Thou wilt do well," replied Ashby; "the beginning of life is repentance."

"I tender unto thee," continued Stanley, "my most earnest apology for my foul attempt upon thy life, and for the vile treatment thou didst after meet from me. Whatever compensation or satisfaction thy justice and honour may require, I will cheerfully and readily perform."

"Thou art already pardoned," replied Ashby. "The humiliation of apology to a mind like thine is punishment enough."

"Thou art of a noble nature," cried the flattering hypocrite, "but if thou wouldst add to the favours thou hast already done me that one of breaking my repentance to Margaret Vernon, thou wouldst cover me with obligation — I dare scarcely undertake it myself — the shame of my crimes would strike me speechless."

"I had thought to have quitted the country forthwith," answered Ashby; "and I will not, after that which has

passed, shadow this mansion with my presence; but if it will serve thee to open thy remorse to the good maiden, I will stay until evening in some adjoining hamlet. She hath but now sent me word to meet her at dusk upon the terrace, for she feared to draw suspicion of some untoward event by conversing with me in public — perhaps 'twas the shame of being known to such a wretch as I am — though I will not blame her — she was ever amiable and condescending — but I know not the way to the terrace."

"I will readily conduct thee," returned Edward Stanley. "It will be some return for the favours thou art putting on me. Be without the Gate-house after the twilight hath commenced, and I will myself meet thee. But stir not unless thou seest me walk past thee twice; some others may pass, and thou mayst be deceived."

"I will mark thy directions," said the enthusiast, "and will await thy coming."

"Thou wilt not fail to soften the damsel to forgiveness," said Stanley. "By my faith, there is nought on earth I covet

so much as to be restored to her good opinion."

"Thou shalt have no cause to complain of my exertions," replied Ashby; "the issue lies not with me."

They then parted, and the enthusiast quitted Lathom.

CHAP. XV.

But, oh! what damned minutes tells he o'er,
Who dotes, yet doubts; suspects, yet strongly loves.
OTHELLO.

THERE can be little doubt that Edward Stanley was highly gratified with that piece of information which he had received from the credulous Ashby, relative to his assignation with Margaret Vernon, as it placed, at once, before his apprehension, the means of converting the floating suspicions of his brother into actual certainty of his mistress's breach of fidelity. With the ready wit of a practised intriguant, he formed upon the spot, and while conversing with the fanatic, a plan of operations which he lost no time in carrying into execution. Hastening to his brother, whose mind, racked with the tormenting doubts of jealousy, eagerly

caught at any thing which was likely to confirm or dispel his suspicions, he informed him that Ashby had quitted the castle, stung with resentment at the indignity offered to him, and breathing revenge against Earl Derby and his friends; but that he was not without suspicions, arising from some words which Ashby had casually suffered to escape him, that he intended to return for the purpose of having one more interview with Margaret Vernon.

"Another interview!" exclaimed the furious knight; "May the fiends tear me limb from limb, if the villain live to see her again."

He laid his hand upon his sword, and was about to quit the castle, when his brother, fearful of some rash action which might thwart his schemes, laid hold upon him, and asked him what he was about to do?

"To do!" cried Sir Thomas, "why, sir, to follow this masked wolf, and to slay him. Think ye he shall triumph in his treachery? No, or I will not live to see it."

"But thou wouldst not slay an unarmed man, if thou hadst the power, Tom Stanley," said the wily Edward. "Besides, appearances are deceitful, and yet we judge from appearance. Both Margaret Vernon and this stranger may still be innocent."

"Ah, Ned!" cried the knight, softened by this thought, and clasping the hand of his brother, "that word hath brought me comfort. Let us consider her innocent, at least, till she be found guilty. Nay, the proof shall be strong indeed, clear, substantial, plain, and open proof, before I will deem Margaret Vernon a false and shameless wanton."

Heaven grant she may be as pure as the newly blown lily," ejaculated Edward Stanley; "for thy sake it would glad my heart. But thou art not fitted, Tom, for these lascivious days, where the women are vain of their skill in deceit. Thou dost love with thy whole heart, and dost expect an equal ardor on the part of thy mistress, and should it chance that thy rose hath been blown upon, thou art ready to destroy her, thyself, —

nay, the whole world, in the burst of thy fury. If we are to proceed in this investigation, thou must be calm; transports will undo thee."

"I dare scarce proceed," said the Knight despondingly; "and yet, as thou sayest, Margaret Vernon may be innocent."

"And if she be," returned Edward, "the trial of her faith will be no prejudice of her purity. If she be guilty —"

"Ha, say it not!" cried Sir Thomas with great agony.

"Thy honour must be saved," cried his brother steadily, "if thy love be sacrificed. The damsel must be watched, and that task be my care. Do thou be in call, if aught occur answerable to my suspicion."

"I will not credit aught until I see it," answered the knight; "if thou hast proof, actual damning proof of her disloyalty, bring me to see it, — let me curse myself with the maddening sight, and know the worst, — but urge me not now, while every chord in my breast is jarring with agony."

"Oh! that a woman should make a fool of a brave fellow after this fashion!" exclaimed Edward Stanley with a scornful smile. "Why, Tom, if I were in love with all the women of England, and they sought to jape me, I would not heave a sigh nor look grave for the whole bevy; and, i' faith, sorrow is not likely to win them back again; a moping, miserable face like thine is enough to fright away a good-humoured wench. Have at them, if they will be loving; if they are coy, let the fit hold them; if they fancy other men, still am I pleased, for in this hot world, there are always women enow to serve my turn."

"Thou art a libertine, Ned Stanley," said the Knight.

"I am none," answered his brother, with great vivacity; "but one had better be a libertine than the prince of melancholy fancies. Thou wilt be laughed at by all the holiday wenches as a youth crossed in love."

"Prithee, do not jest," said the Knight, "I am in no humour for pleasantry. My heart is like lead in my breast."

"Ha, ha!" cried Edward Stanley, "I would not barter my humour for our brother Harry's birth-right. I would give somewhat to exchange persons with thee for one day — I' faith I would 'tice thy mistress into love with me, and dash her hopes when they were at the highest."

"It were unbefitting to triumph over a woman," said Sir Thomas; "but with such a woman as Margaret Vernon thou might'st find thyself deceived. Ha! how unlike is she to one that would betray! How ingenuous, how candid, how frank, and free from mystery! She was not easily won, and it is strange — most strange, she should so easily be lost. If she had loved another man, why accept my courtship?"

"Her father wished it," replied his brother; "and no one, not his own children, dare question the Knight's authority."

"But I tell thee," said the Knight eagerly, "that which I never breathed before, that our hearts seemed united. She hath joined with me in a confession

of love, hath given and accepted a token of fidelity. Free and unconstrained hath she received my vows, and blessed me, alas! I then thought so, with her own."

"The more traitress was she to feign that which her heart did not feel," replied his brother.

"If she prove false, traitress was she, indeed!" cried Sir Thomas. "I would I had never seen her — that her dissembling beauty had never caught my eyes — that I had never heard the sound of her false tongue which hath led me to destruction. Oh love! in happiness thou art a cherub — a sweet smiling babe garlanded with roses and breathing pleasure; but adversely, thou art the king of fiends and devils, armed with all instruments of death and tortures, and crested with the plagues of the furies. He that must feel thy scorpions, had best never taste thy delights; — let him defy thy power, rather than feel thy rod."

It will scarcely be believed by persons of a generous feeling, that Edward Stanley could stand by, and hear the pitiful cries, and witness the agonizing spirit of

his brother, without deep sympathy and remorse for his own crimes; but that accomplished traitor not only beheld all with the most perfect indifference, but inwardly rejoiced at the sad condition to which his own villanous arts had reduced his victim. Like Zanga, he hung over his prey, and whispered to himself,

"Groan on, and with the sound refresh my soul."

The passionate exclamations of Sir Thomas Stanley had scarcely subsided, when Margaret Vernon joined them. She was paler than usual, her eyes lacked their lustre, and her gaiety and cheerfulness of spirit were superseded by depression and despondency. Her countenance seemed like the waters which acquire a sullen calm after being lashed into fury by the tempest. Upon beholding Edward Stanley, her step hesitated; and her voice faltered as she addressed his brother, whose first resolution was to return no answer to her salutation; but his love overcoming his suspicions for the moment, he spoke to her with great tenderness. The worthless author of their

sorrows, in the mean time, gazed upon them with breathless anxiety, as if fearful that their very spirits could divine those abuses which he had fixed upon them; and when, in order that no singularity might appear in her conduct, the damsel turned towards him, he bowed very low, without daring to raise his eyes to her face. In fact so cowardly is guilt, that the boldest bad man cannot, without shame, look upon the countenance of an infant whom he has injured. An open and upright aspect seems to have been allotted by Providence to the virtuous only; whilst those that are degraded by crimes, are reduced to a nearer affinity in visage with the brute creation.

Sir Thomas Stanley, after he had spoken to his mistress, continued to regard her with a sad and anxious look; and her dejected appearance, for a short time, dispelled all other thoughts than those respecting her health. He took her hand, and leading her to a seat, placed himself beside her, as if he had still been in the full confidence of her integrity; and when she was thus seated,

her spirit appeared to recover somewhat of its elasticity; her eyes brightened, and her features again beamed with life and vivacity; clouded only at intervals as she encountered the form of Edward Stanley, by the remembrance of her adventure.

"Thou art better now," said the Knight; "thou art again like thyself. — I scarce knew Margaret Vernon as she entered the room."

"Wouldst thou have me always laughing?" said the damsel; "thou wouldst soon be sated with a continual simper, — for sameness in aught breeds a dulness of appetite."

"Ha, think'st thou so?" cried the Knight, stung with a sudden pang of returning jealousy.

"Yes, dost not thou?" returned the maiden; "so think all. A love of variety is implanted in our nature; the gaudiest flower that blows in the parterre, the sweetest tune ever played upon instrument, the richest jewel ever worn by eastern prince, would pall admiration by becoming familiar. Beauty is not

the test of pleasure, — it is novelty alone."

The Knight, who had hitherto retained the hand of his mistress, let it fall in amazement; his jaw dropped, and he stared incredulously in her face without offering at any reply. The surprise of Margaret Vernon at the singular manner of her lover was no less excessive, and after waiting some moments for his answer, she continued in an earnest tone, "There is sure no need of such marked admiration on so simple a subject. If you are so ignorant of common truths, I shall send you to school again. Let me, for example, note this natural principle by your countenance. Wert thou at all times grave and melancholy — sour in aspect, and sad in spirit, think ye this unceasing severity would please? — or if thou wert like a froth-bubble, continually blown up with empty vivacity, always pert and simpering, would this harlequinade be bearable? No, Thomas Stanley, — to give delight, our feelings should be chequered with alternate light and shadow, — all gloom, or all sunshine is

monstrous and intolerable. Our Great Creator who knoweth best what is fitted for his creatures, hath allotted us a change of times and seasons, and hath therefore imbued our hearts with that love of novelty which gives force and spirit to our pleasures."

"Perchance then, in love, variety is desirable?" said the Knight with a tremulous heart.

The maiden shuddered, as she heard these words fall from the mouth of her lover, whose inquietude she at once detected, and plainly perceived the cause. But, too delicate to enter into any explanation before another person, she endeavoured to subdue her agitation, and with a smile replied, "Love hath no link in the chain of nature, but is rather the band that holds it together. Love may not be estimated by other passions; it hath its own several laws and privileges, and will not be constrained by human agency. Master Chaucer says,

> When mastery cometh, the God of love, anon
> Beateth his wings, and farewell, he is gone.

"So he doth," cried Sir Simon Degge, entering the room; "and 'tis very true, i' faith. — When I was of your age, Master Edward Stanley, my father, the late Sir Simon Degge, rest his soul! — by the way, Simon is our family christening name, — my ancestors for three hundred years have been Simons, — well, i' faith, my father would have married me to Dame Elizabeth Crowstone, the widow of the rich Knight, Sir Marmaduke Crowstone, of the Ravenstone-edge. She was worth three thousand marks by the year, and had a fair estate in land. — But, *quid tunc*, Sirs? She had a hump upon her back like Southhead ridge, near my estate of Bowdon, and one of her eyes had gone on a voyage of discovery. I was always held as dutiful a son as pious Æneas was to old Anchises; but i' faith, I could not marry the widow. — The first sight of her threw me into a cold sweat, which lasted until we were five miles from Ravenstone."

"But the question is, Sir Simon," said Edward Stanley, "whether variety

is admissible in love? This question hath been warmly spoken to, — now let us hear thine opinion."

"Of a truth, the *variorum* readings are exceeding pleasant," replied the Knight with a smirk; then changing his smile into a look of sad gravity, he continued, — "But were it my good fortune to win the love of a fair maiden, she should have no cause of regret. I would chastely dedicate myself to her alone, and remain as constant as Ulysses was to Penelope, — no, — I mean Penelope to Ulysses."

"But think ye she would be as constant to you?" said Edward Stanley.

"Marry, she should want no encitement as far as example went on my part," returned Sir Simon, "as every good wife doth follow in the steps of her husband, so if she regarded the pattern I would set her, we should be renowned throughout the land, as the model and *ne plus ultra* of connubial happiness."

"Then why do ye not, with all these recommendations," said Edward Stanley,

" propose yourself to the lady of your worship? 'Tis odds but thou succeed."

" Ah! Master Stanley," replied the Knight with a heavy sigh, " the maiden I adore is so beset with suitors on one side, and on the other, so surrounded, and, as you military gentlemen say, circumvallated on every hand, that I, not being one of the boldest of combatants, am in despair lest some of them do carry away the prize before I durst approach the fortifications. I have, forsooth, as thou knowest, fired some small shot at a distance; but they seem to have taken no effect, so as either to cause a breach, or frighten the city into surrender. — Nay, I fear my ineffectual efforts have only strengthened the enemy, or what is worse, assisted my rivals in their operations."

" Thou shouldst march boldly up to the walls," said Edward Stanley, " and storm the fortress into surrender. — If thou canst not subdue it by that means, it is impregnable."

The traitor, as he spoke these words, raised his eyes for the first time to the

face of Margaret Vernon, and stared upon her with the fierce impudence which was natural to him. The damsel, recalled, by the significant emphasis with which he spoke, to the recollection of his villany, trembled and grew pale, whilst he inwardly banqueted his revenge upon the torments that he was preparing for both the lovers. But as it was now his intention to appear another creature to the maiden, and to endeavour to gain her confidence by an affected change in his disposition, he found it necessary to curb every symptom of that domineering triumph with which he surveyed his adversaries; and to assume a look of repentance and of humiliation for his past treachery. To a countenance so much used to dissimulation as Edward Stanley's, this masquerade was an easy mutation, and he commenced his part by jarring a chord in the breast of his former protegé, Sir Simon.

"I fear," said he to the Derbyshire Knight, "that, notwithstanding your gallantry, Sir Simon, the lady you address has proved wholly insensible."

"Nay, not wholly," answered the Knight. "Thou didst say this morning I had sufficient hopes."

"Then I flattered thee against hope," returned Stanley; "for in truth thou hast none; and I cannot any longer join with thee in persecuting the lady Margaret with thy suit. It may become a serious matter."

"In truth I meant it so," rejoined Sir Simon. "I was never more serious in my life. I have no thoughts of any impropriety; my intention is to join in matrimony with the lady."

"Very like," replied Edward, gravely. "No one here can suspect so sober a personage of any dishonourable purpose. But has it never struck thee that thou art somewhat on the wane for so exquisite a beauty? Her high spirit would keep thee ever on the alert, — thou wouldst be in an everlasting turmoil. She would hurry thee to death in a fortnight."

"On the wane!" exclaimed the Knight, with a bitter grin; "everlasting turmoil! hurry me to death! Why, Sir,

I might be four-score instead of five-and-forty. — But why didst thou first incite me to this enterprize — lead me to indite sonnets, and mount me on a high-trotting horse, that has not only shaken all my bones out of joint, but hath nearly broken my neck by a fall? Didst thou not cocker me up, when I told thee the maiden laughed at me, and say it was the best proof I could have of her favour? Marry, Sir, I am ill used — i' faith I am."

"Be pacified, Sir Simon," said Edward Stanley; "I knew not then."

"Pacified!" exclaimed the angry Knight; "hold out your crimson mantle to a turkey-cock, and bid him be pacified. If I had not doubted mine own judgment, I had not needed thy assistance. — But thou hast betrayed me."

"Betrayed!" said Edward Stanley, with a darkened brow.

"Yea, betrayed me, Master Stanley," cried the Knight, without regard to his adversary's angry looks. "I understand the word — I think I do. —

Peradventure thou knowest more of deeds than letters; — but I know when I am ill-used — marry, do I. — Thou dost fancy belike,

> " Quia tu gallinæ filius, albæ,
> Nos viles pulli, nati infelicibus ovis,"

thou may'st play thy japes upon me. But remember, sir, I am a Knight; and what's more, a justice o' the peace; and what's more, I can show as much money in my pocket as most people, though my doublet be not sleeved with a difference. I am not blind; I can see well enough, — *nunc una facies et necnon diversa.* I am betrayed, — I repeat the word."

" I pray ye be calm, Sir Simon," said Sir Thomas Stanley. I fear some error is afoot, which hath misled you; but the lady hath sure given no encouragement to your suit?"

" I know not whether she has or not," returned Sir Simon, " for I am unskilled in the mysteries of gallantry; but your brother, the worthy master Edward, gave me his assurance she had. It is true, I fancied she purposed me no favour; it

seemed to me as if she made a jest of mine addresses; but your brother would not have me construe her behaviour by literal acceptation. I must take it, as wizards tell fortunes, by contrariety; and pretty proof have I had of his knowledge! Here, when I expected the matter was fairly concluded, he tells me with a cursed melancholy face, that the lady is insensible to my addresses."

"Says he not the truth, fair Margaret?" said Sir Thomas, turning to the damsel.

"Nay, I am truly sensible of the honour Sir Simon doth confer upon me, in making me the object of his attachment," replied Margaret, smiling; "but he hath confessed love is not to be bound — we cannot command our hearts; — he must therefore accept my excuses for the good he hath designed me, and seek out some fairer bride, whose affection will make a proper return to his own."

"Very handsomely spoken," returned the Derbyshire Knight, who had listened

to the reply of the damsel with earnest attention; "and I rest satisfied with the maiden's negation; but I still say I have reason to complain, not of this excellent minion, but of Master Stanley here, who, it doeth seem, hath practised on me for his diversion."

"Thine anger blinds thee," replied Edward; "I had no such purpose."

"Marry, sir, I believe ye not," returned the Knight.

"Not believe me!" exclaimed Edward Stanley, laying his hand upon his sword.

"Nay, I will not fight," cried the Derbyshire Knight. "I have a right to express mine opinions without being called on to defend them *vi et armis*, as the statute saith; and moreover, being a justice of the peace, I cannot with propriety be a party to the breach of it; — I know my duty, — i' faith I do. If thou drawest weapon in my presence, I will commit thee for a common brawler."

The fierce soldier smiled contemp-

tuously, and suffered his rapier to fall to his side.

" I had forgot with whom I was dealing," said he. " I crave your pardon, Sir Justice, I will not offend again."

" Well then, this offence I pardon thee," said Sir Simon, gravely; " though 'tis no light matter to offer at sword-drawing, which the law terms affray, or an affearing of the Queen's lieges. But thou art young, and hast passed thy life, since thou didst come to years of discretion, in foreign lands, where thou couldst never hear the voice of thy country's jurisprudence, and amidst a set of unbridled desperadoes, who know nothing either of law or gospel."

" Thou art wrong," replied Edward Stanley; " the provost marshal has as much work on his hands as the high sheriff. The only difference between them is, that the marshal is the minister of summary justice, whilst the sheriff is as slow as a thief, going to the gallows, could desire."

" I' faith, if thou wert i' the cart,"

cried the knight, laughing heartily, "thou wouldst think he went fast enough. I never knew a man yet that heartily longed to throw himself into the deep sea; but I judged, from the fellowship which thy hand seemed to have with thy weapon, that thou wert often at points with thy comrades."

"Feuds will arise in the best ordered society," answered Edward Stanley; "and a man must have an intimate acquaintance with his sword, or his relationship to this life will not be of long duration."

"But when ye fight and make a rout i' the camp," cried Sir Simon, "what says the marshal then?"

"When we make a rout, there is no fighting," replied Stanley. "The provost is satisfied, whilst he hears the loud revel and hollow, that we are good companions. Strife and bloodshed are wrought in silence: while the fierce foes are digging wounds in each other with their daggers, their comrades watch them with sober attention; and when

the contest ends in the fall of one, if no man will avenge his blood, they leave the corse, and return to their carousal."

"Mercy o' me, what a band of devils!" exclaimed Sir Simon, gasping with horror. "Well sir, and when the provost finds the dead man, or dead men, it may be, what says he?"

"Nought, if he hath not witnessed the duel," replied Edward Stanley; "for there is no villain so pitiful as to accuse his fellow; and the whole army might be strung up, if all the seconds of such combats were held accountable. The provost buries the body, and there is an end."

An end, indeed! a base and lamentable conclusion!" said the Derbyshire Knight with great solemnity.

Whilst the Knight of Derbyshire and Edward Stanley were engaged in this dialogue, Margaret Vernon and Sir Thomas had walked to the other end of the room, and were engaged in an animated conversation, which was not unobserved by the wily conspirator, who,

fearful of any explanation being entered into, which might disorganize his plans, had engaged Sir Simon Degge in this desultory conversation, as an apology for staying in the room. With eyes of keen penetration, he gazed upon the abused lovers, and grew mad with rage, as he perceived the traits of jealousy disappear, one after another, from the countenance of his brother, and the generous animation of returning confidence succeed in their place. Love seemed to have resumed his empire in the breast of the Knight, who squeezed the hand of his mistress, and gazed upon her features in a rapturous ecstasy. In a short time the lovers withdrew, and left the disturber of their happiness in a state little to be envied by the fiends of darkness. But he still quieted his gall with the anticipation of the revenge he should enjoy at night-fall, when Sir Thomas would behold his supposed rival in actual conference with his mistress; and, glutting himself with this idea, he cried, "Let him have the liver of Prometheus, I will

blast it!" and left the room wrapped in his speculation.

"Prometheus!" exclaimed Sir Simon, astonished beyond measure at this sudden and unlooked-for exclamation. "What mean'st thou?—hollo! stop!"—but finding he took no notice, he followed him out of the room.

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